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PREFACE.

THE Tracts contained in the present Volume carry out still further the programme of the Series set forth in the Preface of the first Volume.

Two of the popular non-theistic systems of the day are examined, and their effects and tendencies are pointed out. In one case a careful comparison of the system discussed with Christianity is instituted.

The testimony of history to the age of man, the testimony of the most ancient religions to the primitive beliefs of man, the witness of the moral nature of man to the religion of Christ, and the witness of the Holy Land to the Holy Scriptures,—all of them questions of Present Day interest and importance,—are topics also discussed.

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Busy men too, whose own faith is established, who have very little leisure, but who take an interest in the controversies of the time, have expressed their thankfulness at having discussions of the subjects treated in the Tracts which they can read in such spare time as they can command for the purpose. That the Series may continue to exercise an ever-deepening and extending influence for good on the side of truth and righteousness will be the prayer of every Christian reader.

October, 1883.

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CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM

COMPARED IN THEIR

INFLUENCE AND EFFECTS.

BY
William Garden
THE REV. W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D.
(Professor in the New College, Edinburgh),
AUTHOR OF
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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
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Argument of the Tract.

CHRISTIANITY and Secularism are to be tested by their fruits. Early and recent achievements of Christianity show the excellence of the fruit-tree. Objections on the ground of corruption, imperfect fruits, etc., are examined and met. Secularist objections are then specially dealt with. First, the attack of Secularism on the *principles* of Christianity is stated and examined. Christianity does not teach men to despise this life, nor to succumb to all injustice and oppression; it appeals to men's hopes and fears of future retribution, but at the same time it calls in and exercises all that is noble in us. George Eliot's article on *Worldliness and Other-Worldliness* is examined and criticised. Christianity does not demand a submission to arbitrary authority, but requires obedience to the will of God as the expression of all that is best and most wholesome. Secular obedience to natural law is shown to involve the same principle as Christian obedience to revealed law. The principles of Secularism are then examined, and found wanting. The place of atheism in secular systems is indicated. From Dr. Flint's criticism of certain secular principles it is seen that they are open to great objection. The want of a *moral dynamic* in secularism is pointed out. It is shown that secularism borrows certain principles from the Bible, not the Bible from secularism. The outstanding *facts* connected with the efforts of the two systems are next examined. It is shown that secularism has no great list of benefactors to the race, while in every department Christianity abounds in such. It is shown too that efforts for civil and religious liberty in this country have been greatly stimulated by religion. The paper concludes with a story of a waif showing that only a full, free Gospel is capable of reaching the wanderer and restoring him to his Father's house.

CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM

COMPARED IN THEIR

INFLUENCE AND EFFECTS.

"Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Is not the tree known by its fruits? Christianity and Secularism both claim to be good fruit-trees, in respect of their civilizing and elevating influence. It ought not to be very difficult to decide which is best. We believe that the decision must be wholly in favour of Christianity; but Secularism cries "No!" and demands a scrutiny.

Systems tested by their fruits.

When Christianity first appeared there was no need for any scrutiny. Its purifying, elevating, and civilizing effects were plain to every one who had eyes to see. Under the influence of Paganism, society, in the Roman world, had become almost hopelessly corrupt. Roman poets, historians, and philosophers bear frightful testimony to the undisguised abominations which abounded in Rome itself, the most refined city in the world. Vice was not only rampant, but it was utterly shameless. On all hands it is admitted that Christianity

Triumphant result at the rise of Christianity

was like the introduction of fresh life-blood into a wasted body, ready to perish. It was a new thing to see men enduring torture and surrendering their lives rather than utter a hollow word. It was a new thing to see strong men exposing themselves to peril to protect the weak, or sacrificing their comforts to feed the hungry or to clothe the naked. "How these Christians love one another!" was the exclamation which such sights provoked. "What women these Christians have!" was the remark when the life-long virtue of such a woman as Anthusa, the widowed mother of Chrysostom, passed under review. In later times, alas, Christianity was less marked for its purity, and we find instances of men, when pressed to become Christians, retorting, "What good would it do us to be Christians, when such a one is a cheat in business, and such another a tyrant in his house?"

Modern instances.

In our own time we have had some beautiful illustrations of the power of Christianity to civilize and elevate the most barbarous communities.

Fiji.

We have seen some of the Fiji and other islands transformed from the wildest savagery and cannibalism, into orderly, industrious, and intelligent communities.[1] We have seen bright oases springing up at Kuruman and Lovedale, and other spots in the Kaffrarian desert. And the whole history of eighteen centuries has shown more or less that the

[1] See, *inter alia*, Miss Gordon Cumming's *At Home in Fiji*, 1881.

progressive civilization of the world is found under the shadow and shelter of Christianity. We fear no challenge when we affirm that in its purest form Christianity has fostered the ideas and encouraged the habits out of which all true civilization springs. It has fostered regard for *man* as essentially a noble being, having an immortal soul made in God's image, with boundless capacities of expansion and improvement; regard for *woman* as the helpmeet and companion of man, — not his drudge, or slave, or concubine; regard for *marriage* as a holy contract, entered into before God, not to be lightly set aside; regard for *children* as the heritage of the Lord,—not burdens and incumbrances, but lent by the Lord to be brought up for Him; regard for the *family* as a divine institution, intended to be a fountain of holy joys, and a nursery of all estimable habits and all kindly affections; regard for the *sick*, the *infirm*, and the *aged*, whose sorrows we are ever to pity, and whose privations we are to make up in some measure from our more ample stores. The very word Christian, in its true spirit, has been identified with all these ideas and habits; in that sense it has a glory all its own; and no juster criticism can be passed on persons outraging truth and rectitude, than that they are a disgrace to the Christian name.

Principles of Christian civilization.

More than this, we affirm that in the region of morality, Christianity has fostered a spirit of truth

Moral influence of Christianity.

and fair dealing between man and man; so that over the world Christian traders, for example, bear on the whole a different character from those who are not Christian. Thus much we may still say in spite of painful drawbacks. Christian tribunals have a reputation for justice unknown in Mahometan and other countries, where bribery and corruption are so prevalent; more regard is paid to the rights of the poor; and the oppression of the defenceless is counted shameful. In the region of political life greater pains are taken to secure orderly government, to protect life and property, and to encourage industry and commerce; greater pains are taken too (alas, sometimes far too little!) to maintain peace and friendship with other communities, and, as the result of this, commodities are more freely exchanged, and the welfare of both sides is advanced. Moreover, under the shadow of Christianity, art, science, and literature have flourished and advanced; indeed, there is hardly such a thing as enlightened science or literature in any modern nation not professing Christianity.

Yet the salt may lose its savour.

We readily admit that Christianity is capable of being corrupted on the one hand, and reduced to dead formalism on the other; and that in both of these cases the salt loses its savour. That this would happen in the history of the Church,—that there would be most grievous error and declension, followed by wild violence and bitter persecution,—

was clearly foretold by Christ and His Apostles.[1] But wherever Christianity exists in its true character, it always acts beneficially on human society. It gives its tone to the laws and institutions of the country; it educates the people, it liberates the slave, it cares for the poor, it heals the sick, it fosters the arts of peace, it mitigates the horrors of war; and, not content with improving the condition of those at home, it takes to its heart the remotest nations of the earth, and plans, labours, and prays that all its blessings and privileges may flow out to the whole family of man.

Our argument challenged

We are not allowed, however, in these days to say all this unchallenged. Our argument on the elevating influence of Christianity on society has been questioned both on general and on special grounds. In this tract our chief business will be with the special objections of Secularists; we will therefore touch but lightly, in the first place, on some of the more general objections to the argument arising from the effects of Christianity.

Four objections

It is objected (*a*) that Christianity has not even been able to keep itself pure, free from the corruption of foreign or worldly elements; (*b*) that it has failed to absorb and supersede all other religions, as it would have done had it really been the only divine religion for man; (*c*) that it has often shown

[1] Matt. xiii. 25; xxiv. 12; Acts xx. 29, 30; 2 Thess. ii. 8, 9; 2 Tim. iii. 2.

a persecuting spirit, and a reliance on force as the instrument of its advance; and (*d*) that it has failed conspicuously to extirpate evils of the grossest and most repulsive kind; it has failed to abolish war: it has failed to root out drunkenness and debauchery, so that in our large cities even now, towards the end of the nineteenth century, we find much of the old pagan disorder and sensuality under the very shadow of the Christian Church.[1]

Corruptibility of Christianity implies essential purity.

In reply to all this we have to remark,

(*a*) That the liability of Christianity to become corrupted by worldly elements, so far from proving that it is of mere human origin, is a proof of the opposite. As we have said, Christ and His apostles foretold it. But besides this, let it be observed that if, like the pagan religions, or like Mahometanism or Mormonism, Christianity had been of man, it would have been sure to have enough of worldly elements in its own composition, and half-hearted adherents would not have required to borrow these from a foreign source. The Christianity of the New Testament is too pure for human nature before it is changed by Christian influence; and when men do not yield themselves to it wholly, they are glad to mix it with more palatable

[1] These and similar objections to Christianity, as an agent of civilization and human progress, will be found more or less formally stated by Buckle, Lecky, Amberley, Paine, Holyoake, Bradlaugh, Watts, and other opponents of Christianity.

materials in order to adapt it in some degree to their unrenewed taste. This explains the corruption of Christianity. But Christianity itself ought no more to be rejected because it has been corrupted by worldly admixture, than silver should be pronounced worthless because it is tarnished by exposure to the air.

Nature of provision for spreading Christianity

(*b*) Again, the failure of Christianity to absorb other religions is no argument against its divine origin when the nature of the provision for spreading it is considered. It was never intended to be made known directly or at once *to all;* it was first to be communicated to a selected few, and these were charged with the duty of making it known to others. This is uniformly the method enjoined in the Christian books. It depends for efficiency on the faithfulness of those to whom the charge is given first. But in a vast number of cases, the recipients of the Gospel have been careless of this duty, and hence the limited diffusion of Christianity. Is that to be pleaded against its divine origin? Many parents neglect their duty to their children, but for all that, we all hold that the family institute is a blessed arrangement. The best system in the world is helpless if it be not worked by an efficient executive. Surely it would be the very essence of unfairness to confound the system with its officers, and condemn

the one for the manifest and inexcusable negligence of the other.

Charge of intolerance met.

(*c*) In like manner the charge of intolerance and persecution does not tell against Christianity itself, but against its mistaken and faithless administrators. It is not pretended by our opponents that the Christian books enjoin intolerance and persecution. No word can be quoted from the lips of our Lord or His apostles that gives the faintest countenance to such a policy. Such words as the following point in the opposite direction: "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." "My kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight." It is indeed lamentable to think how much intolerance and persecution have prevailed in some branches of the Christian Church. But in so far as these weapons have been used, violence has been done to the true spirit of Christ. It is no real objection to our argument that Christianity propagated by force has not been a blessing to the world; for force kills love, and Christianity without love is like a body without the soul.

Failure of Christianity to eradicate great evils.

(*d*) It is a more serious objection that Christianity, even where it has been most successful, has failed to root out gross corruption—such as drunkenness, greed, cruelty, and war. But here it is indispensable to bear in mind how Christianity works.

It is not like the light or the air, influencing all men alike. It becomes a great transforming and renewing power only in the case of those who receive Christ into their hearts. Our Lord Himself taught emphatically that in order to fruitfulness there must be such a union with Him as that of the branch to the vine. No phrase occurs more frequently in the writings of St. Paul than "in Christ." Christians, therefore, so called, are really of two kinds, those who have Christ in their hearts, and those who make only a profession of following Him. It is the first only who can be expected to manifest the real spirit of Christianity. Now, the force of the Christian current in any community can only be in proportion to the number and earnestness of such persons. Unhappily, hitherto, no great community has ever consisted permanently and wholly of such elements.

Systems to be judged by their essential tendencies.

Christianity, therefore, has never yet been seen in this world in its full strength. It has always had an antagonist, and its nett results have been only in the proportion in which its own power has prevailed over antagonistic forces. If, in spite of this antagonism, the influence of Christianity on society has on the whole been wholesome and beneficent, the testimony thus arising to its heavenly origin is all the more striking. If a goodly crop of wheat has been reaped even where the enemy has been busy sowing tares, the excellence of the

wheat and of the husbandry which produced it is the more fully shown. It is ever to be borne in mind that in many respects Christianity is not acceptable to the human mind as it exists unchanged; that while on the whole it commends itself as a divine provision for man's need, it encounters much dislike and opposition from man's waywardness and wilfulness, and to a corresponding extent its influence is neutralized. But, as Butler remarks in his Analogy, the merits of systems are often to be judged by their essential tendencies, rather than by their actual achievements. It is objected to Butler's doctrine of the government of the world being founded on virtue, that virtue does not always overcome vice. True, says Butler; but virtue even in this world *tends* to prevail, and hence you may infer that the government of the world rests on virtue.

Butler's argument.

So Christianity even in Christian countries has not wholly overcome drunkenness, greed, dishonesty, ambition and other sins, but it tends to overcome them. Can this be doubted? Take its most characteristic *precepts*—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Take its most characteristic *motives*—"Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are God's." "Walk worthy of the

Essential tendencies of Christianity.

Its precepts.

Its motives.

vocation wherewith ye are called." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Take its most characteristic *models*—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." "Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Take its most characteristic *rewards*—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with me." "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." Take its grand *consummation*, the glorious result of all its efforts and achievements—"Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might . . . present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Who will dare to say that the essential tendency of such a system is not contrary to all vice and moral disorder; and that if Christianity does not succeed in this world in eradicating all sin, it is not because its tendency is defective, but because the antagonism it encounters both in the hearts of its own servants and in the world where it wages its warfare impedes and thwarts its beneficial intention?

Its models.

Its rewards.

Its *finale*.

But still, in opposition to all these explanations, it is sometimes urged, that if Christianity were really

Explanations and apologies objected to.

divine, it should not need all these apologies and explanations; it would have such a force about it as to preserve its own true character in spite of all contrary influences, to secure administrators of the proper spirit, to bear down opposition and antagonism of every kind, and to prevail far more decidedly over the devil and all his works. To have to speak of it apologetically, as has now been done, is to defend its goodness at the expense of its strength; as you sometimes say of a feeble brother, that he has good intentions but cannot carry them into effect.

Objection contrary to analogy.

Truth.

Righteousness.

Freedom.

Is this a just objection? We affirm that it is contrary to all analogy. All truth is of Divine origin, but how slowly does truth prevail over error! Righteousness is of Divine origin; but what a warfare it has to wage, and how slowly it wins the day over injustice and selfishness! Freedom is of Divine origin; but what a painful, difficult, and tedious process has it been to vindicate its claims! It is not God's way to bear down all opposition to the good and the true, as a swollen river sweeps everything before it. Men are dealt with as reasonable and responsible beings; they are placed under probation in this matter; their power of choice is recognized; and they are permitted to offer that opposition to the claims of the Gospel which proves such a hindrance to its progress and rapid triumph. Secularism, with all its loud

claims, must confess that it finds it no easy thing to conquer the forces that are opposed to it.

The question is one of fitness.

The real question is not which system sweeps away everything that opposes the true progress of mankind, but which system is most effectual in grappling with these hindrances. Absolute triumph is not to be looked for, at least at the present stage; the question is, where are the forces that do most and that promise best? In a dark and disordered world, where is the power that does most to make the dark light, the crooked straight, and the rough places plain? Who that fairly surveys the history of the world can fail to admit that Christianity is that power?

Special objections of Secularism.

Passing from these general views, let us now examine the special objections which modern secularism advances to the position that Christianity, more than any other force, tends to ameliorate and elevate human society, and let us weigh the claim which it makes on behalf of itself to much greater efficiency in this respect.

Its confident appeal to the working man.

The tone of secularism on this subject is loud and confident. It is here we find the attraction that is constantly presented in tracts, articles, speeches, and controversies, in order to draw into its ranks those who feel most keenly the defective arrangements of society at the present day. Society is out of joint, it says, and the poorer class are

suffering grievously from its condition. No wonder! Hitherto society has been moulded by Christianity, and Christianity teaches men to despise the present life, to count all its advantages as evil, and to accept as blessings all the ills and sorrows of time, not trying to lessen them, but waiting for a life to come where all will be put right.[1] Secularism, on the other hand, bestows all its attention on the present life, and strives with all its might to rectify the disorders which are so numerous and so glaring.

The one Secularist remedy for all disorder.

Having come to see very clearly that all these disorders are due to one cause,—violation of the laws of nature, physical, moral, and social,—it proclaims with unbounded confidence that for every such evil there is just one remedy, but a remedy all-sufficient, viz., to find out and follow the laws of nature. It is the great aim of secularism to do

[1] "Christianity aims solely at preparing men for a future life, and it does this by teaching them to despise the advantages and the pleasures of the present life. It teaches men, as they say, not to look at the things which are seen, not to set their affections on things below; and declares that those who love the world and the things of the world do not love God and cannot be saved. It represents riches, plenty, cheerfulness, and the good things and pleasures of the present life, as dangerous, as enemies to the soul. It pronounces woes on those who are rich and full, and those who laugh, and represents a jest and an idle word as exposing a man to damnation. Afflictions, want, pain, reproach, persecution, etc., that the men of the world regard as calamities, it represents as blessings, not joyous for the present, but calculated to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness afterwards."—*Secular Tracts*, No. 1.

this, and the more that it can induce men, especially the toiling multitude, to abandon the guidance of Christianity, and accept that which it offers in its stead, the speedier will be the advent of a well-ordered world, where peace and plenty, happiness and prosperity will reign among the children of men. Secularism has its millennium, and that will come when men have learned to give universal obedience to the laws of nature.[1]

Two main points in the secularist attack.

In its attack on Christianity, as bearing on the elevation of society, secularism does two things: I. It denies that the *principles* of Christianity are adapted to social improvement, and maintains that they tend to social disorganization and ruin, while the principles of secularism are perfectly adapted to the good of man. II. It denies that the *facts* usually pointed to as showing the good results of Christianity, bear out that conclusion, —any good of that kind that Christianity has appeared to accomplish being due not to itself, but to secular principles which it has unconsciously accepted.

[1] Secularists "believe all nature to be governed by fixed laws, in conformity to which our well-being depends. To teach men to understand and obey these laws is therefore the great aim of all their efforts, both in educating the young and addressing adults. It is hardly necessary to add, that their objects and principles are directly opposed to those of Christianity."—*Secular Tracts*, No. 1.

Principles.

I.—Principles.

Alleged principles of Christianity objected to.

The *alleged* principles of Christianity which secularism condemns as of pernicious influence are mainly these: (1.) Christianity despises this life, counts poverty a virtue and wealth a sin, rebukes the spirit that thinks of to-morrow, and thus cuts at the very root of all social improvement and comfort.[1] (2.) It encourages men to succumb to injustice, to take no steps for the protection of their property or their persons; when one smites them on the one cheek they are to turn to him the other also, and when one would rob them of their coat, they are to let him have their cloak likewise.[2] (3.) The great motive which Christianity urges for doing right is the fear of hell on the one hand, and the hope of a future reward on the other; a motive which appeals to nothing higher than selfishness, and which even if

[1] "Christians in this island must take no thought for the morrow. Economy and a desire for the future of this world must be entirely ignored. It would be a crime to establish post-office savings banks, inasmuch as laying up treasures on earth is strictly forbidden."—*Christianity, its Nature and Influence on Civilization.* By Charles Watts.

[2] "If an enemy is cruel enough to invade this Christian island, the inhabitants dare not interfere because Christ told them to resist not evil." "Christians clearly and emphatically teach submission to physical evil, tyranny, and oppression."—*Ibid.*

Alleged principles of Christianity objected to.

it were more effectual than it is, cannot develop anything of a high and noble order,—cannot make men brave, generous, and truly good.[1] (4.) Christianity compels men to receive truth on mere authority; they are to believe just what they are told, neither more nor less; in this way reason is superseded, all free thought and inquiry is repressed, and the soul becomes a mere machine, with a slow, hard, grinding movement, instead of a living being, soaring gracefully in the regions of light, welcoming every truth which is disclosed to it, and shaping its life in harmony with all that is good and true.[2]

[1] "If you feel no motive to common morality but from fear of a criminal bar in heaven, you are decidedly a man for the police on earth to keep their eye upon, since it is matter of world-old experience that fear of distant consequences is a very insufficient barrier against the rush of immediate desire. Fear of consequences is only one form of egoism which will hardly stand against a dozen other forms of egoism bearing down upon it."—*Westminster Review.*

[2] "What stimulant did Christ give to think freely when He said, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me. . . If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned?' Is there any incentive to impartial investigation in the gloomy words, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned?' Once establish among mankind the erroneous notion that truth is confined to one particular channel, and that those who do not go in that direction are to be cast forth as a withered branch, and then the impossibility of unfettered thought will be immediately apparent."—

Christianity said to despise the present life.

(1.) The objection to Christianity as teaching men to despise the present life, and as representing poverty a virtue and wealth a sin, is founded on well-known sayings of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere. "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven. Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven . . . It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is, however, maintained by secularists that these views were confined to the Founder of Christianity, and that they have been repudiated by the great body of His followers. The truth is, that Christians generally have interpreted Christ's words in a relative sense, not as condemning absolutely all regard for property, or all concern for the morrow, but as condemning that idolatrous and mischievous use of property which puts it in the place of God, giving it the first place in the heart, and that cankering anxiety for the morrow which makes no account of His fatherly care and love. That this

Sermon on the Mount.

True interpretation of the sermon.

Free Thought and Modern Progress. By Charles Watts. "The Bible is no authority to Secularists. The will of God, as the clergy call it, in their eyes is mere arbitrary, capricious, dogmatical assumption; sometimes indeed wise precept, but oftener a cloak for knavery and a pretext for dogmatism."—G. J. Holyoake, *Principles of Secularism.*

is the true view to be taken of Christ's words is proved by many considerations; it is in harmony with the wise, sensible, unexaggerating tone of His teaching generally; it is in harmony with Old Testament teaching, which Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil, especially that of Moses and Solomon, by whom every encouragement was given to the people to practise thrift and industry, and to exercise a becoming forethought; it is in harmony with other parts of Christ's teaching and other actions of His life; for, on the one hand, He did not require rich men like Zaccheus and Nicodemus to part with their wealth, nor did He charge the woman with the alabaster box with cheating the poor. On the other hand, in His parable of the talents, and in other parables, He recognized the duty of industry and the benefit of thrift.

Our Lord's use of Orientalisms

The condemnation passed on Christ is really a condemnation for the use of a mode of expression well understood in the East, which, to give emphasis to a point, substitutes the absolute for the comparative. Who could imagine that Christ meant to enjoin it as a duty absolutely to hate our father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and our own life also, if we would be His disciples?[1] To interpret this passage thus would be to make Christ guilty of extreme and unaccountable

[1] Luke xiv. 26.

His condemnation of avarice.

self-contradiction. The true shade of idea is given by Himself in Matt. x. 37, "He that loveth father or mother *more than Me.*" Is He then to be condemned for warning men by a strong Oriental idiom against the worship of money? Has that passion been so harmless, has it caused so little of the disorder and miseries of the world as to deserve to be passed lightly by? Have the sorrows and sufferings of the poor been so little due to the greed and ambition of the rich? Have the devourers of widows' houses, and those who have withheld from their labourers their hire, been so rare or unknown in the world's history that no emphatic blast of the trumpet behoved to be given against them? Who will venture to say so? What true friend of the labouring multitude can fail to be grateful to Christ for having raised His voice so loudly against that greed of gold which has so often proved a double curse—a curse to those from whose sinews the gold has been wrung, and a curse to those whom it has bloated and pampered? If He showed in strong terms that the blessings of the kingdom usually lie much nearer the path of the poor than that of the rich, is He to be discredited for that reason, especially among those who eat their bread in the sweat of their face?

Christianity alleged to be indifferent to temporal wrongs.

(2.) It is on the same misinterpretation of the spirit of Christ's words that the objection is founded, that Christianity requires men to succumb

to all the evils of life, to be uniformly meek, patient, and longsuffering,—never resisting evil, and never denouncing wrong. Here again it is alleged that Christians have usually repudiated this injunction, and especially that Paul, instead of resembling Christ in this respect, was a contrast to him. "The Christianity of Paul," it is said, "was widely different from that of his 'Divine Master.' The character of Christ was submissive and servile; Paul's was defiant and pugnacious. We could no more conceive Christ fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus, than we could suppose Paul submitting without protest or resistance to those insults and indignities which are alleged to have been heaped upon Christ."[1] The writer of these words, with a mind darkened by prejudice, may not have been able to conceive of Paul manifesting the meek spirit of his Master; but no such difficulty will embarrass those who read his words,—"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. . . . Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head" (Rom. xii. 19, 20).

Paul and Christ.

As to the alleged servility of Christ's spirit, it will occur to most men that there was little indeed of that shown when again and again He resisted the devil in the wilderness; or when He made

Alleged servility of Christ's spirit.

[1] Watts, *Christianity, its relation to Civilization*, p. 6.

His whip of small cords, and drove the traders from the temple; or when before the multitude and His disciples, He rebuked the hypocrisy of the scribes and pharisees, and in words of scathing reprobation denounced the men that devoured widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers. It is strange how little the witnesses against Christ agree among themselves in our day, any more than they did in His. At the very time when the secularist is accusing Christ of submission and servility, Renan proclaims that He had carried the denunciation of His opponents to such a height as to make the country too hot for Him, so that He actually welcomed the cross as a deliverance from complications that could not longer be borne! It is not easy to describe the holy instinct that taught Christ when to submit and when to denounce, but the records of His life show that He Himself knew well the proper time for each, and that He was equally at home as the lion and the lamb—whether He was called to denounce the tyranny of the rulers, or to stand as a sheep dumb before its shearers. The same spirit of combined courage and meekness was shown by Stephen, when he arraigned so boldly the impiety of the nation, and then surrendered his life so touchingly with prayer for his murderers. Who shall say that in any essential respect Paul was different? The combination of qualities is rare and heavenly,

Renan and secularism contradict each other.

Combination of courage and meekness in Christ.

And in Stephen.

not likely to be comprehended by those who on principle fix their gaze only on the things of earth. But this we may safely say, and history will bear us out, that the best and bravest of those who have stood up against the oppressor and defied his force and fury, have derived no small share of their courage from the words and the example of Him who said to His disciples—"Fear not them that kill the body;" while, at the same time, the best and meekest of the martyrs, manifesting the sublimity of patience in dismal dungeons and at the fiery stake, have been no less indebted to the influence and example of Him "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not, but committed himself to Him who judgeth righteously."

Christianity combines opposite qualities.

(3.) But again it is represented that the great motive furnished by Christianity for doing right is the fear of hell on the one hand, and the hope of a reward in heaven on the other. It is said that Christianity teaches us to regulate our whole conduct by a regard to our interests in the world to come. We are not to sin, because if we do we shall suffer for it in hell. We are to do the will of God, whatever it may be, in this life, because if we do we shall get a prize for doing it in heaven. Christianity, in short, is nothing but an appeal to our fears on the one hand, and our greed on the other; it is a system of threats and bribes; its

Alleged appeal of Christianity to inferior part of our nature.

motives in themselves are mean and ignoble, and in their influence they can have but little good effect. To illustrate their want of power the saying of one of the worst criminals in England, who ended his life on the gallows (Dick Turpin), is sometimes quoted, that he believed both in God and the devil, and did not care a straw for either. He had not even the faith of the devils, who believe and tremble.

Twofold answer.

The answer to this representation is twofold: First, that the appeal which Christianity does make to the fears and hopes of men in regard to their future welfare is thoroughly right; and second, that it is a miserable misrepresentation to say that this appeal constitutes the sole or the chief means by which it seeks to persuade them to a holy course of life.

Place due to hopes and fears.

To say that you are not in any way to rouse the fears and the hopes of men in regard to the future would be simply absurd. Christianity appeals to our whole nature, and surely both hope and fear are integral parts of that nature. For what purpose are our fears and hopes given us if they are not to move us when our welfare, and it may be our eternal welfare, is concerned? In the state of mind in which men are when the first appeals of Christianity are made to them, their hopes and fears in reference to the future life as contrasted with the present, are almost the only channels

At the beginning of spiritual history.

through which they may be arrested, and shaken out of their sleepy indifference to all spiritual things. It is only a beginning that is made through such hopes and fears; but great preachers do not scruple to make this beginning. When John the Baptist saw the Sadducees come to his baptism he said, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus urged men to cut off their right hand when it caused them to offend, rather than allow their whole body to be cast into hell.

Higher ground assumed.

But what critic, desiring to convey a fair impression of the motives appealed to in the Sermon on the Mount, would ever say that they were connected with the lower part of our nature? "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;"—is not the appeal here to something infinitely higher than dread of pain or greed of possession? Or let us consider the first words of the Lord's prayer: "Our Father, which art in heaven;" is that an appeal to selfishness? Or was it a low selfish feeling, to be gratified hereafter, that our Lord addressed, when, bidding His followers consider the ravens and the lilies, He called them to filial trust in the love of the Father who cared for them? No gospel precept is more assailed by secularists than this, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all

these things shall be added unto you." Does that mean that we are to be careless of all that tends to our material good in this life, and that if we are, we shall be rewarded with abundance of it in the future? Has it not an infinitely loftier meaning? That the attainment of righteousness, goodness,—every holy principle and habit, is far more valuable than of earthly property; and that if the first place in our hearts be given to these, we need never dread, either here or hereafter, that we shall be left empty of other things.

Christ's fellowship enlarges and elevates the soul.

Men are not long in the company of Christ before their nature is expanded and purified, and desires arise in their hearts that no amount of earthly good, here or hereafter, could ever satisfy. The idea of a heaven of sensual pleasure is the grovelling imagination of the Mahometan. Hardly less carnal is the conception of a heaven consisting of an unlimited supply of what are called "the good things" of this life. How infinitely beyond such vulgar lines have all the men and women risen who have become eminent in the Church for the purity of their devotion, the consistency of their character, or the warmth of their untiring philanthropy!

George Eliot on worldliness and other-worldliness.

Some years ago an article appeared in the *Westminster Review* entitled "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness," now known to have been written by Miss Marian Evans, the distinguished

George Eliot of literature.[1] It is a somewhat trenchant and even bitter criticism of the poet Young, the author of *Night-Thoughts*, both as a poet and a religious man. What rouses her feeling against Young is the sharp antithesis he is charged with drawing between this world and the next, and the belief he seems to hold very strongly, that the great foundation of morality in this life is the doctrine of retribution in that which is to come. No doubt Young exposes himself in some degree to criticism, but the critic runs to the opposite extreme. George Eliot affirms strongly that in point of fact men are very little influenced by the fear of a distant retribution. Where there is a fierce passion at work, the distant future will be little thought of, —will be no restraint on the passion; and as to acts of goodness, if there be not a love of goodness in the heart, the mere hope of reward will not produce such acts. Or if it should, they would be mere selfish acts, performed from a selfish motive, and therefore not acts of goodness at all. Inherent regard to what is right and true, and genuine sympathy with our fellow-men, are, in this writer's view, far more efficient motives to goodness than regard to our own interests in a coming life. She goes so far as to say that "it is conceivable that

George Eliot on worldliness and other worldliness

Young's *Night Thoughts*.

Best moral influences.

[1] This paper is confidently ascribed to her by one who claims to have been an intimate friend, Mr. Frederic Myers, in a recent article in *Scribner's Magazine*, New York.

in some minds the deep pathos lying in the thought of human mortality—that we are here for a little while and then vanish away, that this earthly life is all that is given to our loved ones, and to our many suffering fellow-men, lies nearer the fountains of moral emotion than the conception of extended existence."

Influence of future retribution.

There are several positions here liable to remark. The first is, that in point of fact, men are little influenced by the dread of retribution in a life to come. Is this an enlightened view of human motive, as shown in history? Is it the doctrine of the Greek tragedians, of Dante, of Shakespeare? Why should "conscience make cowards of us all," if the doctrine of future retribution is so impotent? Take away the doctrine of retribution in a future life from Shakespeare, and would you not strip him of one great element of his strength?

Sympathy and love of goodness stronger forces.

Another position is, that inherent love of goodness and genuine sympathy for our fellow-men are much more powerful motives to the doing of what is right than either the fear of punishment or the hope of reward in the life to come. Undoubtedly they are; but the two classes of motives do not exclude one another, and both of them have their place in the Christian heart. It is a more relevant question, How are you to get men inspired with pure love of goodness and tender human sympathy? We affirm that this is a part of Christian education,

But how are they to be produced?

and that, whatever may be true in exceptional cases, it is only under the teaching and influences of the Gospel, in the case of mankind generally, that this spirit can be formed. Is not the formation of this spirit one of the highest aims of Christianity? What are we to make of the eulogy of charity in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians? Or of this earnest word to the Philippians: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." What more powerful motive can be furnished to tender human sympathy than the example of Christ? Where was it ever more touchingly instilled than in the parable—"I was a stranger, and ye took Me in"? Or where, among the children of men, was there ever a more beautiful development of this spirit than in the great heart of the Apostle Paul?

Christian provision for producing them.

But the most questionable position in George Eliot's statement has yet to be noticed. She conceives that, in some cases, the pathos of human life is more moving, has more power over our hearts, when death is conceived of as ending all, than when there is the thought of a life to come. Does this mean that men are moved to more sympathy with their fellows, and to greater efforts to

Mortality or immortality —which rouses sympathy most?

help them, when they think of them as having no hereafter, than when they think of them as immortal beings? In that case, one of the tenderest periods of human history should have been the period of the French Revolution, when death was voted "an eternal sleep." Was human life regarded then with exceptional feelings of sanctity, when each morning furnished its new batch of victims for the guillotine? If it be said that at that time fierce passions were too much roused for men to act according to their nature, we may turn our attention to another scene. When Dr. Livingstone was trying to establish Christian missions in the Transvaal, for the benefit of the natives, he was bitterly opposed by certain Boers, and one reason for their opposition to his missions and of their general treatment of the negroes was that in their view they had not souls. Did the thought that "death ends all" to the negro fill the heart of the Boer with a more tender sympathy for him? If seizing his cattle, making slaves of his children, compelling him to work without remuneration, and sending him into battle in front of the white man to receive the charge of the enemy, be proofs of such sympathy, undoubtedly the negro received them without stint. Most men, however, would be inclined to think that the sympathy of Dr. Livingstone was of a healthier order, when he gave his life with such unwearied devotion to the cause of

Experience at French Revolution.

Experience of Livingstone,—Africa.

the Africans, strove to enlist the civilized world on their side, proclaimed to them the story of God's love in Christ, and by the example of the heavenly Father tried to engage them to behave to one another as brethren.[1] Whatever may be true of the "some minds" that, according to George Eliot, are so moved to sympathy for their fellows by the thought that there is no hereafter, it is certain that with the mass the effect is quite the opposite; that sympathy and the desire to help are intensely quickened by the thought of the eternal future, and that the lives and interests of the feebler classes would have but little consideration from the stronger if it were the common belief that they pass away into forgetfulness like the beasts that perish.

Alleged imposition by Christianity of a hard authority on the soul

(4.) The fourth objection of Secularism to Christianity is, that it subjects us to a hard authority in our belief and practice; it puts reason in fetters, checks all freedom of movement, and prevents the soul from welcoming truth, and from shaping its life in harmony with what is simply good and true. It compels us to pay strict regard to what it calls the will of God, both in what we believe and in what we do. We may see strong reasons for believing or for doing what is different from this will of God; but be the reasons ever so

[1] See *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, pp. 80, 90, etc.

powerful, it is impious to give effect to them; there is nothing for us but blind submission to a will which we dare not question.

Authority in other spheres.

There is probably no piece of modern poetry that has been more admired than Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*, and no lines that have been regarded as happier, or bringing out more vividly the sublimity of the occasion, than these:—

> "'Forward the Light Brigade!'
> Was there a man dismay'd?
> Not though the soldier knew
> Some one had blundered:
> Their's not to make reply,
> Their's not to reason why,
> Their's but to do and die!
> Into the Valley of Death
> Rode the six hundred."

Yet what was this but a case of entire surrender to another will, blind submission to hard authority? Will men allow that there may be occasions when submission to a human will is not only right but noble, but question, nay deny the duty of such submission to the revealed will of God?

Secularists themselves recognize a hard authority.

That secularists and other sceptics should deny that the Bible is the supernatural revelation of God's will to man on matters of faith and practice, and should refuse it all claim to authority, is consistent enough, though, in our view, utterly wrong; but that they should reprove Christians for rendering submission to what they believe to be the Divine will, or represent such submission as a poor super-

stition and miserable bondage, is inconsistent and ridiculous. The fact is that they themselves act in the very same way towards what they believe to be the supreme authority in the world. What they hold to be the supreme authority is the laws of nature, and to these laws they maintain that implicit obedience is due.[1] Men must conform themselves to the laws of physiology, nay, they must even accept the laws of hereditary disease, however hard and unreasonable it may be that through these laws their lives should be endangered by the ignorance of their forefathers or the carelessness of their neighbours. Now, why do secularists make it "the great aim of all their efforts to understand and obey the laws of nature?" Because they believe this course to be on the whole most salutary and advantageous for human beings, most conducive to the prosperity of human life.

The authority of God represents all that is good and perfect.

This being the case, is it unreasonable for Christians to have a similar belief in the excellence of *their* supreme authority,—the will of God? Is it not natural that since God is a perfect Being, infinitely wise and infinitely good, His will should be regarded as identical with what is best and highest for man? Now, the Scriptures are to the Christian the revelation of the will of God. In accepting the Scriptures as his authority, he

[1] See Note quoted at p. 17.

believes that they express in summary form that wise and holy will which is the surest guide to all prosperity and blessing. The Christian does not reject the laws of nature, but he accepts over and above the law of revelation. He conforms to the laws of nature because they require what is most beneficial to his material welfare; he obeys the laws of revelation because they require what is most beneficial to his moral and spiritual well-being. Are we to be blamed and ridiculed because we obey the one as implicitly as the other? The will of God expressed in revelation may *seem* to us not fitted to its end, just as the laws of nature sometimes appear not fitted to their end, when they bear hard on human life and welfare; but just as, in the latter case, we may be sure that, on a wider view, they are the best laws that can be given, so in the former we may rest assured that the goodness and wisdom of God are capable of the fullest vindication. We say again, that if men choose to deny Revelation, they are consistent in finding fault with the Bible; but if they charge those with dishonouring their reason who bow to the authority of God in the Bible, they are as inconsistent as if they should charge their own friends with dishonouring their reason for accepting the authority of the laws of nature.

Analogy between laws of nature and laws of revelation.

To determine the boundaries of reason and revelation is a somewhat delicate matter, and we

Sphere of reason in regard to nature and revelation analogous.

will not attempt the problem here. We will merely note the analogy between the spheres of nature and revelation. In nature, reason is called to investigate, to verify, to compare, to arrange phenomena, and to draw conclusions corresponding to them; but reason must not alter or modify phenomena, nor draw any conclusions which they do not warrant. In revelation, reason is called to read, verify, explain, compare, and systematize the contents of the record, but not to alter or modify any. In both cases, reason is *minister et interpres* —a servant and an interpreter; in neither case must reason be a judge.

Principles of Secularism.

Having thus vindicated the principles of Christianity in their bearing on the welfare and progress of the human family, let us now examine the principles of secularism, and inquire whether they are adequate to the end in view.

Place of Atheism and Secularism —difference among secularists.

It is well known that secularists are not agreed among themselves as to whether atheism is an essential element of secularism. Mr. Bradlaugh has led the party that maintain that it is; Mr. Holyoake has taught that it is not. Atheism is at the foundation of Mr. Bradlaugh's paper, the *National Reformer*.

According to Mr. Bradlaugh, all religion has a

Mr. Bradlaugh's atheism.

pernicious influence on human welfare and progress. Religion is superstition, it encourages reliance on false methods, it creates confusion, it perverts the mind, and draws it mischievously away from the true lines of improvement.[1] Mr. Bradlaugh's secularism, therefore, not only makes no use of any religious view, but holds it to be only evil, and that continually. To believe in a holy Father, who guides and strengthens His children to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; in a gracious Saviour, who gave Himself for us to redeem and purify us, and alike by precept and example taught us that the servant of all, the man who does most for the good of the world, is the greatest of all; and in a Holy Spirit, whose office it is to convert the soul, turn the wilderness into a garden, and prepare men for a blessed life where there shall be none to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain: such faith is the most pernicious enemy to the cause of human welfare and the civilization of the world. The self-restraint

All religion pernicious.

[1] "There is another point that I do not think I need trouble to discuss—whether secularism is atheism or not, because I think it is. I have always said so, I believe, for the last thirteen years of my life, whenever I have had an opportunity of doing so."—*Mr. Bradlaugh, in debate with Mr. Harrison.* "I am, too, an atheist, and I hold that the logical and ultimate consequence of adopting secularism must be atheism." — *National Reformer*, Oct. 16, 1881. On the other hand, "There are many secularists who disagree with me. . . Clearly all secularists are not atheists."—*Debate with the Rev. J. M'Cann, D.D.*

and devotion to duty that come from the sense of a Divine eye upon us; the inspiration for the work of faith and labour of love springing from fellowship with a Divine Brother who loved us and gave Himself for us; the hope darted into our soul in moments of despondency by the thought of a Divine Spirit brooding over the moral chaos of this world, and by many diverse instruments slowly but surely working out the new creation—all this is to be remorselessly discarded. If we will but believe it, the voice of man is loud enough to still the winds and the waves; the arm of man is strong enough to subdue all the powers of evil; every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of man shall be revealed, to the confusion of all who dream that there is a God in heaven, and who refuse to serve the god of this world, or to bow down before the golden image which atheistic secularism has set up.

Man can and must do all.

As advocated by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, secularism does not deny the existence of a God, nor denounce religion absolutely. It maintains, however, that it is not by religion that the social welfare of humanity is to be advanced. The welfare of man in this world is a thing by itself, and is to be promoted solely by secular means.[1] The main attention

Mr. Holyoake's place for religion.

[1] "If we are told to 'fear God and keep His commandments,'

of all men should be given to the things of the present life. The aim of men in this world should be to seek their own highest good, and the highest good of their family, their country, and their race. True good is that which is in accordance with the laws of nature, especially physiology; and evil is that which contradicts these laws. Duty is synonymous with ascertained utility to the greatest number; for Providence, secularism substitutes science; for prayer, prudence and well-directed labour; for the worship of God, the service of man; for faith, knowledge; for submission to authority, reverence for truth; and for religion, all the pleasures of domestic and social life.

Professor Flint's *Antitheistic Theories.*

Some of these positions of secularism have been very ably discussed by Professor Flint in his *Antitheistic Theories*, especially the three following:

1. That precedence should be given to the duties of this life over those which pertain to another.

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lest His judgments overtake us, the indirect action of this doctrine on human character may make a vicious timid man better in this life, supposing the interpretation of the will of God, and the commandments selected to be enforced, are moral; but such teaching is not secular, because its main object is to fit men for eternity. Pure secular principles have for their object to fit men for time, making the fulfilment of human duty here the standard of fitness for any accruing future. *Secularism purposes to regulate human affairs by considerations purely human.*"—*Principles of Secularism*, by George J. Holyoake.

2. That science is the providence of man, and that absolute spiritual dependency may involve material destruction. Three secular positions.

3. That man has an adequate rule of life independently of belief in God, immortality, or revelation.

In reply to the first of these positions, Dr. Flint shows that of all the counsels that men need to have pressed on them, surely the last is to attend more to this life and less to the future—the very course to which most men are already much too prone; that the distinction between the two sets of duties is unfounded, for if there be a God, duty to Him is a duty of this life; and if there be a future world, it is our present duty to take heed of the fact; nor can anything but evil come to any good cause from disregarding the eternal mercy and justice of God. M. Pasteur lately conveyed the same thought in the French Academy, when he charged Positivism with failing to take account of the most important of all positive notions—that of the Infinite. In reply to the second position, Dr. Flint shows that it is a mistake to oppose providence and prayer to science, for we honour science as much as secularists, and yet we believe both in providence and prayer as harmonizing with science; and as to science becoming a substitute for providence, the idea is absurd, inasmuch as First secular position. Second secular positior

science—the science of gunnery, for example—may be directed to purposes of destruction; unless science be directed by goodness, it is nothing. In reply to the third, he admits that there is in our nature a sense of morality, a sense of right and wrong, apart from religion. But morality can have no valid obligation, unless there be a God who enforces and who administers the moral law. Moreover, it is religion that gives sanction and inspiration to morality. "One glance of God," says Archbishop Leighton, "a touch of His love, will free and enlarge the heart, so that it can deny all, and part with all, and make an entire renunciation of all, to follow Him." The alliance of secularism with utilitarianism in morals is regarded rather as a weakness than a benefit to secularism. The mass of people cannot enter into the speculative labyrinth to which this question leads. And if the reason why we are to do our duty is only because it is on the whole our interest to do it, we may well ask why should we do any act which would involve sacrifice,—why should we sacrifice our interest to the interest of others? The very definition of morality which secularism adopts seems to be fatal to all noble and self-sacrificing action.

Third secular position.

Religion necessary to morality.

In the same line we offer two observations:

1. Secularism makes very light of *the dynamic power* which is to propel men to act in the way

Dynamic power wanting.

most conducive to their own true welfare and the welfare of the community. In one of the *Secular Tracts* to which we have referred, the expectation is confidently expressed that "bringing men to an acquaintance with the facts of physiology and general science will gradually annihilate drunkenness, licentiousness, excessive indulgences, prostitution, and intemperance of all kinds." This expresses correctly the general drift of secular teaching. The world is an ignorant world; enlighten it, and it will become good.

Great trust in knowledge of physiology

Now, apart from all questions of theology, we ask, Is this notion founded on a true view of human nature? Is there nothing in the old pagan maxim, "Video meliora, proboque; deteriora sequor;" or, in the words of the Christian Apostle, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do." Has the simple enlightening of men's understandings ever been found enough to turn them from evil ways? Has mere light such a power to subdue the fever of lust, to restrain the drunkard's thirst, to humble the ambition of the conqueror, to bridle the greed of the miser, that nothing else is required? Who does not know that the giant enemy of society is selfishness, and till that spirit is cast out, society can never be either prosperous or happy? And how are secularists to cast him out? They are to show men that while a lower selfishness may incline them to disorderly

This trust opposed to human nature

ways, a higher selfishness, a wiser regard to their true interest, will make them reverse their action. Thus selfishness is to be cast out by selfishness in another form. Unfortunately, this way of casting out Satan has never proved a very successful process. A much higher dynamic is needed.

The Christian dynamic.

Now, of all that is grand in Christianity, nothing excels its moral dynamic. Talk of the enthusiasm of humanity, it is a mere idea. But the enthusiasm of Christian love is a mighty power. The enthusiasm of hearts arrested by the mighty love of Christ, drawn into sympathy with Him, reflecting on their fellow-sinners the compassion that has embraced themselves, seeing in this disordered world a blessed sphere of service to God and man, and throwing their energies into the work of blessing it—that is a wonder-working power! It goes on unweariedly in the work of faith and labour of love; never deeming that it has done enough, or that it can ever do enough for Him whose love has fallen on it so richly, and is so well fitted to bless the whole family of man.

Secularists rob Christianity of some of its own principles.

2. Our second observation is that secularists are in the habit of doing Christianity a great injustice by denying to it the benefit of some of its own principles, and representing these as the property of secularism alone.

If the question concern the efficacy of prayer or the reality of Providence, it is assumed that

Christianity cannot recognize the uniformity of the laws of nature. If it concern some practical end to be gained, such as exemption from an epidemic, it is averred that Christianity trusts for this to prayer only, and makes no use of natural means. If in connexion with Christianity some human interest is found to be flourishing,—education, for example, or freedom,—that state of things is not due to Christianity proper, but to certain of the principles of secularism which it has for the nonce adopted! All this is unfair and even absurd.

Modicum of credit due to Secularism.

We grant to secularists the credit of trying to make the most of the earthly conditions of human welfare. We allow that there has been some call for their exertions. When Socialism and Communism arose in France, labour was in a disorganized condition, and evils prevailed which undoubtedly there was need to reform. The Communists were not wholly wrong, but their methods were wild and impracticable. Secularists in certain respects desire to do good, they desire a more thorough recognition of the earthly conditions of human welfare, and in so far they are entitled to credit.

Error in representing Christianity indifferent to human interests.

But they are quite wrong in supposing that the religion of the Bible does not include and involve an enlightened regard to the conditions of human welfare. The actual Christian Church may often have overlooked much of this, but

undoubtedly it is in the Bible. In times of great spiritual awakening, the overwhelming importance of the unseen and eternal may have been so put as to make temporal considerations appear to be of no importance whatever; but certainly this is not the teaching of the Bible.

Human interests fully recognized in the Old Testament.

Everything that is good in secularism is in the Bible. What system could have been better adapted to develop the simple enjoyments of human life than that which was prescribed for the Jews in Palestine, when they dwelt under their vine and under their fig-tree, contented, happy, prosperous, as if in a very Arcadia? We may go further back than the days of the Jews in Palestine, back to the days of Adam and Eve; and in the arrangements of the happy garden we may see how carefully the requirements of the physical frame were provided for, and a life inaugurated in which full regard was had to material welfare as well as to spiritual fellowship and growth. Advance if you will to the sketch of the virtuous woman in the last chapter of Proverbs, seeking wool and flax, and working willingly with her hands; like the merchants' ships bringing the food from afar; considering a field and buying it; holding the distaff and laying her hands to the spindle; stretching out her hand to the poor, and reaching forth her hands to the needy; making herself coverings of tapestry, and clothing her household with scarlet: you see in her the model

Palestine.

Paradise.

Book of Proverbs.

woman of the Book, for "many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

'Borrowing the principles of Secularism.'

Yet we are told that when in any way we contribute to the welfare of human life, we are borrowing the principles of secularism. We retort the charge, and maintain that any good that secularism does is done by principles which are found in the Bible. Where was secularism when the Book of Proverbs was written? The fundamental principle of that book is that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and yet on that foundation a place is found for every real maxim of human wisdom. Thrift, economy, diligence, looking well to the flocks and the herds, have all a place in this book, which seeks above all things to extol the fear of the Lord.

Doctrine of the New Testament as to this life.

Does, then, the New Testament supersede the lessons of the Old? When St. Paul rebuked the busy-bodies at Thessalonica, and enacted the rule that if any would not work neither should they eat, it seemed very like going back to the Book of Proverbs. When St. James denounced the employers that robbed their workmen of their earnings, he seemed to echo the thunders of Isaiah or of Amos. The New Testament brings the future life more to the front; it shows more clearly and fully the need of redemption and regeneration, while it unfolds the provision made for these; and it urges more explicitly the infinite importance of our ever-

lasting well-being. But it does not disparage the life that now is. What it is so eager to effect in regard to the present life is that it be used wisely as a training and preparation for the life to come. Most powerfully does it show how utterly it is thrown away and perverted, when it is regarded as complete in itself, when it is viewed in the light in which the secularist delights to place it. The world in its wrong place—the idol and treasure of the soul—is what the New Testament is so constantly reproving. But the New Testament carefully guards all the principles of human welfare; the body is to be kept in subjection, lest evil defile it, and to be honoured as the temple of the Holy Ghost; the bread we need for its sustenance is to be asked in the prayer that at the same time seeks the most spiritual blessings; the various social relations of this life, that of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, subject and ruler, baptized now into the spirit of Christ, are raised to a higher platform of obligation; while every attribute of human life, sin only excepted, is elevated and glorified by our relation to Him who, being the Eternal Son of God, became by incarnation the Son of man.

Worldliness in the Bible sense.

Our earthly life elevated in the Bible.

II.—Facts.

Facts.

Outcome of the two systems.

Passing now from the influence of Christianity and Secularism in their principles, we proceed to view the two systems in relation to the resulting facts. What, so far as can be ascertained, has been the outcome of each in practical life?

The heroes of Secularism.

Who are the heroes of secularism? Who are the benefactors of the world that have adorned its ranks? Who are its philanthropists and patriots? Where is their Valhalla, crowded with the portraits of the great and good?

An obscure list.

In reply to our challenge we get the names of some half a dozen men who bore imprisonment for blasphemy, early in the century, and helped the cause of liberty of speech; we are told of Robert Owen, the founder of New Lanark, and the first, it is said, to have advocated infant schools; perhaps we are told of Voltaire, and his gallant fight against the shameful persecution of Protestants; and of Girard, a rich merchant of Philadelphia, who left money for the magnificent Girard College. Mr. Bradlaugh, in his debate with Dr. M'Cann, besides referring to himself as the uniform and consistent advocate of every reform, tells of William Washington, a secularist miner, who volunteered to go down on a perilous mission

after an explosion in a pit; and the name of John Stuart Mill usually brings up the rear. It cannot be said to be a very imposing list.

Comparison with Christianity.

It is not a very formidable rival to the Christian Valhalla. What name could Secularism ever dare to place beside the incomparable name of Jesus Christ? What influence could it venture to compare with that which we vaguely but significantly

Pioneers of British civilization.

indicate as the spirit of Christ? Who can be matched with the Christian pioneers of British civilization, the Patricks and Columbas, the Cuthberts and Ninians, and, in another sphere of life, the Alfreds of our early history?

Holy women.

Where shall we find women like Elizabeth of Hungary, or Catharine of Sienna?

Holy men.

What names emit the aroma of Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis

Champions of liberty.

of Assisi, or Thomas à Kempis? If struggles for freedom be spoken of, what champions of human rights ever equalled in courage and in character the Eliots and Pyms and Hampdens of the seventeenth century? What fabric of liberty has proved so enduring as that which they helped to establish in England, and their like-minded countrymen, the Pilgrim Fathers, in America? If the

Reclaiming savages.

reclaiming of barbarous nations be the topic, what has secularism got to match our modern missions, with names like those of Carey and Schwartz, Vanderkemp and Judson, Eliot and Zinzendorf, Williams and Moffat, Gutzlaff and Burns,

Livingstone and Patteson, besides hosts of others that have become household words for devotion and self-sacrifice? If the slave has had to be rescued from unlawful bondage, who have toiled for him like Macaulay and Clarkson, William Wilberforce and Sir Fowell Buxton? If an atrocious jail-system has had to be reformed, and abuses corrected in Britain and the other countries of Europe the record of which now fills us with horror, what secularist ever flung himself into the work with the ardour and self-sacrifice of John Howard? If projects for the amelioration of humanity have been started, what can be set over against Pastor Fliedner's work at Kaiserswerth, or John Bost's enterprise at Laforce? What secularist ever did for humanity what was done for our great cities by Dr. Chalmers? Was Florence Nightingale a secularist, or Agnes Jones, or Sister Dora? The great temperance reformers, the men whose appeals go to the hearts of the multitude, and move them like the leaves of the forest, such as John Gough and Francis Murphy, are not secularists, but Christian men. The man who passed the Ten Hours' Act, who has identified himself so conspicuously with the Ragged and Reformatory movement, and with every scheme for the relief of toiling humanity, is no secularist, but the eminently Christian Earl of Shaftesbury. The very animals get benefit from Christian

Rescuing the slave.

Reform of prisons.

Relief of sufferings.

Work in great cities.

Nursing the sick.

Temperance reform.

Relief to the labourer.

And to the cattle.

Undistinguished philanthropists.

philanthropy, for the founder of the movement for cattle fountains and watering troughs was a Christian Friend, the late Samuel Gurney. The names which we have mentioned are stars of the first magnitude, shedding a glory over the firmament; but who does not know of scores of like-minded Christian men and women toiling more obscurely but not less earnestly in the crowded haunts of labour, opening coffee palaces, rearing cabmen's shelters, providing créches, establishing schools, institutes, and classes, sparing no effort to do good where their services are needed among their fellows? What has secularism got to be compared to the great army of Sunday-school teachers, giving their service so readily and so freely for the Christian good of the young? True, it is but a small proportion of our Christian people who are actively engaged in such disinterested labour; but that is just because the mass of men are so slow to realize their responsibilities; beyond all doubt it is the duty of every Christian to labour for the good of others; it ought to be true of the whole Christian community that "no man liveth to himself."

Sunday-school teachers.

Some strong-minded men may be found in any system.

No reasonable man will doubt that under any system a few strong-minded men may be found, able to resist the immediate influence of their system, and to stand forth as men of energy and courage, the friends and protectors of freedom. We

cheerfully admit that there have been such men in the ranks of secularism. But they are not representatives of a system. Take the case of Voltaire. The great writer of the eighteenth century had undoubtedly an active spirit of humanity. His service in the cause of the shamefully-oppressed Calas, and other victims of ecclesiastical tyranny, was a noble service. His efforts on behalf of Ferney were worthy of all praise; the buildings he erected, the industries he encouraged, were real services to mankind. But Voltaire was a man by himself—a man of marked individualism. And for every hundred that followed him in his sneers and jibes at religion, there was not one who adopted his spirit of humanity. Nor does Voltaire's general character serve to adorn his principles. His life was guided by a combined love of money, love of pleasure, and love of fame; he was eaten up with vanity; as a writer, he was cynical, sneering, lying, and most scurrilous and abusive, not taking the trouble to conceal his antipathies to what he believed to be Christianity, or to offer any apology for the unrestrained abuse he poured on its friends.

Voltaire

His service to humanity

His faults

Of Robert Owen we will say that he was one of those strong men who break away from the common ruts, and devise liberal things; but did not Owen find that his system was unworkable, and his house built on the sand? If he was an early advocate of infant schools, let him have all

Robert Owen

credit for it; but after all, what was this service to the cause of education compared with the splendid enterprise of John Knox, wrung in part from the unwilling hands of the Scottish nobility, which contemplated universities, high schools, parish schools—all that was needed for a good education alike for high and low?

A humble Christian schoolmaster.

If personal effort is the true measure of a man's philanthropic spirit, we could more than match the achievements of Robert Owen with that of a humble Christian schoolmaster of the name of Davies, in an obscure district of Wales. Planting himself in a very destitute district, he not only established a school and acted as teacher of the young, with a salary of about £20, but he repaired a church, he established trade, he worked as a colporteur, he distributed Bibles and Christian books on a scale of wonderful liberality; and in his old age, when his good work was sufficiently established, he removed to an entirely new sphere to begin his philanthropic labour from the very foundation.[1] If the history of all the schools established in the British Empire were written. what an immense proportion of the great achievement would be found to be due to the devoted zeal of Christian men and women.

We have made mention of Scotland. That

[1] See a book entitled *James Davies, Schoolmaster of Devauden*, by Sir Thomas Phillips, 1850.

country gets hard measure from the secularists Its religion is "a gloomy nightmare."[1] According to Buckle, Scotland and Spain go together for ignorance and superstition. Whenever religion has been powerful, the people have been miserable, and "the noblest feelings of human nature have been replaced by the dictates of a servile and ignominious fear." But is it not a somewhat notable fact that in the battles for freedom and independence, Scotland has always borne so conspicuous a part? Is it not remarkable that her sons have gone over the world, and, to say the least, have not as a rule sunk into that condition of dull misery that might have been expected of a people reared under such an incubus? There is no country whose outward condition at the present day, in spite of faults and blemishes that are not denied, shows a more wonderful contrast to its condition before the Reformation, when it had neither agriculture nor commerce, industry nor art, learning nor science, and when the energies of its clans and nobles were spent in mutual destruction.

Scotland specially denounced by secularists.

The treatment which some of the greatest and noblest champions of English freedom receive at the hands of secularists is odd, and even amusing. "Our Eliots, our Hampdens, and our Cromwells, a couple of centuries ago, hewed with their broadswords a rough pathway for the people. But it

Champions of English freedom.

[1] Watts: *Christianity, its Nature and Influence on Secularism.*

was reserved for the present century to complete the triumph which the Commonwealth began."[1] And who do our readers suppose were the men that put the copestone on the edifice which the men of the seventeenth century began? Paine, Hone, Carlile, Williams, Hetherington, Watson; being the leading men who suffered prosecution for blasphemy, and the too free utterance of their religious sentiments in the beginning of this century. Verily, "the world knows nothing of its greatest men." It is a pleasure to come upon unexpected wealth, but we fear we are so much under "the nightmare of superstition" as not to be elated by the discovery that the heroes of the seventeenth century have been eclipsed in modern days by so much greater men.

Their alleged successors.

Again, we read that when, in 1662, the two thousand clergymen "resigned their benefices and gave up the national religion of the time because they could not submit to the pet doctrine of the Church, which was passive submission, they adopted the very basis of free-thought principles."[1] But why not go back fully sixteen hundred years? When the apostles stood before the Jewish Council, declined the pet doctrine of passive submission, and declared that they must obey God rather than man, did they not, as much as the two thousand clergymen, adopt free-thought

The St. Bartholomew men.

[1] Watts: *Free Thought and Modern Progress.*

principles? Undoubtedly they did. But is not this a *reductio ad absurdum?* The apostles adopt free-thought principles! There is a world of difference between the conduct of the apostles, and that of freethinkers. It was not at the bidding of their own reason that the apostles declined the authority of man. It was at the bidding of God. Free thought declines the authority of other men at the call of reason; the apostles declined it at the call of God. The two thousand clergymen too believed that they were obeying God; and when His voice was heard commanding them, no other course was for a moment to be thought of.

Free-thought principles contrasted with Christian.

It is very important to observe to what an extent the conflict with the tyranny of the Stuart kings, which did so much to establish our liberties, was a religious conflict. The men that took a leading part in it had their consciences quickened, their nerves braced, and their imaginations roused by a sense of religion. However difficult the struggle, they took heart from the assurance that God was on their side. He was calling them to the battle—could they refuse His call? Their religion gave them a lofty sense of the value of the men whom the king was disposed to treat as nonentities—"dumb driven cattle." Who was Charles Stuart, or any man, that he should lord it over the consciences of men made in God's image, and possessing immortal souls? Who was any

Religous element in conflict with the Stuart tyranny.

earthly king that he should treat redeemed men as if they owed no allegiance to Him who had bought them with His blood? Was it to be tamely submitted to, that in this land the opportunity should be denied of working out, in accordance with God's will, that blessed scheme of spiritual renovation which Christ had established? Was the very Gospel of salvation to be put in fetters at the pleasure of an earthly king?

We do not say that these were the only considerations that nerved the arm of the champions of civil and ecclesiastical freedom in the seventeenth century. No doubt they were animated too by the instinctive recoil of Englishmen from tyranny, and the sturdy determination to resist it by every lawful means. No doubt they felt the stimulus of ancestral example, and would have thought it foul scorn to refuse the legacy of freedom's battle,—"bequeathed by bleeding sire to son." But the religion which taught them to "fear God" and "honour all men" gave a new dignity to the struggle. It magnified the interests involved, it connected the battle with eternity, it mixed it up with the overwhelming value of the soul. Whether or not the struggle would have been an absolute failure but for these considerations it were hard to say; but this we know, that the battle was hot enough and long enough to require the full force of all the resources that could be mustered in the cause of freedom.

Other than religious motives.

Secularist supposition of a colony and its principles.

A secularist has made the supposition of a company of men and women going to an uninhabited island, and there attempting to form a constitution to meet the requirements of modern society, based upon the teachings of the New Testament. And he has tried to show that any such attempt must end in ridiculous failure. Did the secularist not remember that the experiment had actually been tried? Did he never read the history of the *Mayflower* and the Pilgrim Fathers? That certainly was a community of men and women who went, not to a desert island, but to a desert continent, for no other purpose than to carry out in all their fulness the principles of the New Testament. Did the experiment end in disastrous failure? Is that marvel of modern history, the rise and progress of the United States, a proof of disastrous failure? In the very earnestness of their loyalty the Pilgrim Fathers committed some mistakes, and certainly no man would set up the United States as a faultless community; but undoubtedly that country would have had a different history but for them. These good men gave a tone to the new country which has stood it in good stead to the present day; under them, great and good principles acquired a vitality which has been a preserving salt to the nation amid the endless rush of heterogeneous elements which the tide of emigration has poured upon its shores.

The experiment has been tried.

The Pilgrim Fathers.

Value to colonies of a religious basis.

It was an unspeakable boon to America that the foundations of its society were laid by men who did not go there to make fortunes, but to find freedom to serve God. Would that all the other colonies of Great Britain had been founded by men with similar principles! There are some of our colonies where the principles of secularism have had almost unlimited scope, for churches have been but slow to follow to gold-diggings and diamond-fields the hordes that have rushed to them for temporal gain. But where is the colonial paradise, that secularism, pure and simple, has established? If we ask for colonial pandemoniums that have grown up under its auspices, we are more likely to find an answer. The history of the Far West in America may tell a similar tale. It is ludicrous to think how "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" principle would fare, in raw, wild communities, where "every man for himself" is the order of the day. We should fancy that when the schoolmaster had taught the first moral lesson of secularism, that it is the duty of every man to aim at what he regards as his own greatest good, his scholars would think they had got enough, and would proceed to carry out the lesson very faithfully. If he should go on to teach next that it was their duty also to aim at the highest good of their country and their race, we can fancy them much more puzzled. In the first "standard," there would be no failures; but how many would pass the second?

In July, 1880, the present writer, being in America, chanced to see a number of the *New York Herald*, containing a remarkable letter with the signature of "Thurlow Weed." All Americans are familiar with the name of the octogenarian who some years ago was among the greatest and most conspicuous of American politicians. His letter, or, as the editor called it, "sermon," in the *Herald* was not in his olden strain. It was occasioned by the public career of Colonel Ingersoll, the Bradlaugh of the United States. Colonel Ingersoll goes about the country delivering addresses against the Bible, and making men infidels. Mr. Weed's letter contained a comparison between the work of D. L. Moody and that of Mr. Ingersoll. Mr. Moody led men to think of the highest of all subjects; and while promoting their salvation, stimulated self-control, temperance, beneficence, and every other virtue. The line of his progress was marked by the reform of drunkards, the union of divided families, the consecration of young men's energies to nobler objects, the drying up of the sources of the world's misery, and the opening of fountains of benediction and prosperity. What could Ingersoll point to, to match such work? What drunkard had he reformed? what home had he made happy? what life had he rescued from selfishness, and made great and noble? The drift of Mr. Weed's letter was that, tried by its fruits, Christianity was infinitely

Testimony of Mr. Thurlow Weed to the influence of Christianity.

Comparison of Ingersoll and Moody

better than anything that Ingersoll could substitute for it. The letter was interesting not only as written by a man who in his old age had undergone a great spiritual change, but as presenting the view of a man of affairs, a man who knew human nature, and understood something of the forces by which men's lives are moulded. It showed that in the view of such men it is only the gospel of Christ that is the power of God unto salvation, both for the life that now is and that which is to come.

A Unitarian appeal and a waif's answer.

What is needed is the gospel, pure and simple, but large and wide-reaching, full of charity, faith, and sympathy, and proclaimed in simple reliance on the power of God. In a town in the north of Scotland, a benevolent Unitarian minister once took to preaching in the streets. He spoke of the beauty of goodness, and invited sinners to the happiness of a virtuous and orderly life. A group of waifs and harlots hovered near, one of whom, who had not lost all her mother-wit, replied to him in her native dialect—"Eh, man, your rape's nae lang eneuch for the like o' hiz" (your rope is not long enough for the like of us). His gospel was not capable of reaching down to the depths to which waifs and harlots had fallen. It was a longer rope, a profounder gospel, that was entrusted to the Apostle, when Christ sent him to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, *and from the power of Satan unto God.*"

His rope too short.

AGNOSTICISM:

A DOCTRINE OF DESPAIR.

BY THE

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164, PICCADILLY.

Analysis of the Tract

THE purpose of the Tract is practical. It is intended to show the tendency of the really Atheistic Agnosticism so prevalent in the present day. It destroys hope for science, which cannot cast out God from its thinking. In interpreting facts, science is inevitably led into the very presence of a thinking God. Order in nature is best explained by a directing God, especially if the great law of evolution be accepted. Science anticipates greater discoveries than any yet made. Though it is not necessary for eminence in any special science, that any question should be raised as to the foundation of this hope, Christian theism is the best solution of all the problems raised by all the special sciences. The recognition of a personal intelligence, which all science accepts as possible and rational, gives an assured hope to science, and the denial of it takes its hope from science. A personal God is also necessary, in order to give energy and life to conscience. A redeeming God is necessary to give men hope of deliverance from sin and its consequences, and enable them to realize the moral ideal. All hope of this is cut off by Agnostic Atheism. The agnostic ideal is destitute of permanence. Without God's plans and purposes for human well-being, there is no rational ground of hope for man's future. The history of the past affords no hope for the future. Hope for the conduct of individual life in the present, and the certain attainment of another life hereafter, are dependent on faith in God. In as far as God is denied, hope of every kind is abandoned, and life loses its light and dignity, and becomes a worthless farce or a sad tragedy.

AGNOSTICISM:

A Doctrine of Despair.

THE descriptive phrase of the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "having no hope, and without God in the world," when condensed to its utmost might be read thus: *Hopeless* because *Godless*. Each of these epithets is sufficiently significant when taken alone. When coupled together their force is more than doubled. To be Godless is to fail to acknowledge Him whom men naturally own. It is to refuse to worship the Creator and Father in heaven, whom all the right-minded and loyal-hearted instinctively reverence. It is to forsake God, and therefore to be *God-forsaken*, as the homely phrase is: that is, to be a man whom the sunshine warms with no heat and the rain blesses with no refreshment because in the wide world which God has made he finds no living and loving God. No wonder that such a man has no hope--that he is classed

Ephesians ii. 12.

What it is to be godless.

with those "to whom hope never comes that comes to all."

The negative condition of those referred to by St. Paul.

The condition of the persons referred to by St. Paul was simply negative. They are described as without God and without hope. Possibly they did not deny or disbelieve in God. They might have been so occupied with the world itself in its brightness and beauty, that God was absent from all their thinking. Possibly one or another might have had daring enough to say there is no God. Perhaps, though not probably, in those times, some of them held that God could not be known, and invested this dogma with a religious halo to which they responded with mystic wonder. But to them all there was no God, and with them all there was no hope. So wrote our apostle out of

The apostle's experience.

his fresh and vivid experience of the hope which had come to him from the new and vivid manifestation of God to himself, as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ—a hope which thrilled every fibre of his being with electric life. Since his time men in all generations have been transported with the same joyous hope. And just so often

God-forgetfulness and hopelessness.

as God has been forgotten or denied has hope left the hearts and habitations of men. But in all these times, ignorance of God has been more commonly regarded as a calamity or a sin. In our days, as is well known, it comes to us in a new form. Ignorance of God is now taught as

a necessity of reason. The unknowableness of God has been formulated as a Philosophy. It has even been defended as a Theology and hallowed as a Religion. The sublimation of rational piety has been gravely set forth as that blind wonder which comes from the conscious and necessary ignorance of God. In contrast with this new form of worship, the confident joyousness of the Christian faith has been called "the impiety of the pious," and the old saying has almost reappeared in a new guise that even for a philosopher "ignorance is the mother of devotion."

Ignorance of God regarded as a necessity of reason.

I do not propose to argue concerning the truth or falsehood of these doctrines. I shall spend no time in discussing the logic or philosophy of the atheistic agnosticism which is somewhat currently taught and received at the present time. I shall simply treat of it in its practical tendency *as being destructive of hope in man, and therefore necessarily leading to the degradation of man's nature, and the lowering of his life.* I observe

Atheistic agnosticism degrading.

I. *That without God there is no well-grounded hope for science.*

No hope for science without God.

This may seem to be a very daring or a very paradoxical assertion. There is more truth in it, however, than appears at first sight. Inasmuch

as it is in the name of science that ignorance of God is exalted into supreme wisdom, it may be worth while to inquire what the effect upon science would be, could it cast out God from all its thinking. I say *could it do this*, for it would be very hard for it to succeed should it try ever so earnestly. Our newly-fledged agnostics are apt to forget that all our modern science has been prosecuted in the broad and penetrating sunlight of faith in one living and personal God—that not a single theory has been proposed or experiment tried in nature, except with the distinct recognition of the truth that a wise and loving Mind at least *may* uphold and direct the goings-on of nature. The most passionate atheist cannot deny that this is the conviction of most of the living and breathing men about him. The most restrained agnostic cannot but know and feel that the theory which he strives to cherish is rejected by most of the women and children in Christendom who look up into the sky and walk upon the earth. The simple teachings of Christian theism are capable of being expanded into the grandest conceptions that science ever attempted to formulate—conceptions so grand that human reason is overwhelmed with their sublime relationships, and the human imagination is dazed to blindness when it would make them real. The first pro-

Science cannot cast out God from its thought.

The capabilities of Christian theism.

position of the creed which the infant pronounces with confiding simplicity—"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth"—is easily expanded into those conceptions that the man necessarily and intuitively accepts as the background upon which science traces all its formulæ and axioms, and by which it connects its theories and proceeds to its conclusions.

That science must have both faith and hope appears, whether we consider it as an *interpreter*, an *historian*, or a *prophet*. Science is first of all an *interpreter*. Though it begins with facts, it does not end with facts. Though it begins with the seen, it looks beneath the visible and strives after the invisible. So soon as it compares and explains, it connects phenomena and interprets events by forces and laws, by hypotheses and theories. Let it test its theories by experiments a thousand times repeated, what it tests is something it has gained by interpretation, that is, something not seen but believed. Following the unseen along the lines of interpreting thought, science is inevitably, even if reluctantly, led into the very presence of a thinking God.

Science strives after the invisible.

Having gained some insight into the present by this process, science applies this insight in the form of *history*, going backwards into the remotest past and unrolling its records, whether these are written on indestructible tables of stone

Science searches into the past.

All history interpreted by force and law.

or suggested by the casual deposits of heaps of refuse. But history of every kind, even of nature, is interpreted force and law; and force, to be interpreted by law, must be orderly in its actings;

Order in nature best explained by a directing God.

and order in nature, if it does not require a directing God, is, to say the least, best explained by such a God. Especially if the great law of evolution or development is accepted, and so a long story of progress is traced in the past, there emerges and shapes itself into being a continuous plan, a comprehensive thought wide enough to embrace all the events which have successively germinated into being, and long enough to provide for their gradual succession. This requires a single mind as wide as that of one forecasting God, and as unwearied as His understanding.

Science anticipates further and unparalleled discoveries.

But science is also a *prophet*. It revels in its confidence in the future. Science believes that its interpretations of the present and its solutions of the past will be surpassed by the discoveries that are to be; that both nature and man shall continue as heretofore, obeying the same laws as from the beginning—that the revelations already made of both shall be lost sight of and forgotten in the revelations of force and law which the future shall disclose, and that in all this progress one of these revelations shall prepare the way for another, as naturally and as gently as the dawn brightens into the sunrise. Here is hope,

The hope of science.

ardent, confident, passionate hope, and, we may add, rational and well-grounded hope. On what does this hope rest—this hope for the stability of nature's laws and the promise of the evolving future? We need not answer by any abstract analysis or refined philosophizing. We concede that it is not necessary for success or eminence in any special science that this fundamental question should be raised. We know that for eminence in any speciality, the natural faith and hope of men in science as interpretation and history and prophecy, is altogether sufficient, whether it is or is not expanded into actual faith in the living God. We do not object in the least that science stops short in its explanations of phenomena, at molecules, and motion, and inertia, and attraction, and heat, and electricity, and heredity, and development, and variation, and environment. But we do contend that atheistic agnosticism gives no solution of those explanations that are fundamental to science which can be so satisfactory as is the creed of Christian theism. We also contend that the personal thinker is more than the scientist who interprets and prophesies, and that the living man demands and accepts a personal God as the best solution of all the problems which every special science raises, but which no special science can solve.

Eminence in any special science not dependent on faith in God.

Christian theism the best solution of the question raised by all the special sciences.

Illustration.

Perhaps you have traversed a forest at midnight, and have painfully and slowly felt out your path among the objects which the darkness seemed to conceal rather than reveal. You have mastered it by slow but sure steps, such as the blind man feels out by exact and reasoning touch. Anon you traverse the same forest by noon. How luminous has it become by the aid of the all-pervading light! Possibly you do not think of the glorious sun from which this light proceeds, but you cannot but know that what was once an obscure thicket, beset with dimness and shade, is now flooded with the revealing light, and that hope and joy have taken the place of caution and doubt and fear. In like manner does the recognition of a personal Intelligence who may be known by man give an assured hope to what men call science. In this way has it been to its advancing hosts a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. The denial of such an Intelligence, or the assertion that he cannot be known, takes from science its hope, because it withdraws from the universe the illumination of personal reason and personal love, which all scientific thinking accepts as possible and rational.

The recognition of a knowable personal Intelligence gives assured hope to science.

II. *To be without God is to be without hope in respect to man's moral culture and perfection.*

What we *are* is of far greater importance than what we *know*. Strength and perfection of character are the supreme aim of all right-judging men. When they think of what man was made to be, and of what they themselves might become, they cannot but aspire. But strong as conscience is to elevate, control, and command, a personal God is needed by man to give to his conscience energy and life. Personality without is required to reinforce the personality within. Conscience itself is but another name for the moral person within, when exalted to its most energetic self-assertion and having to do with the individual self in its most characteristic manifestation, as it determines the character by its individual will. The theory that denies that God is a person very naturally and logically denies that man is a person. It makes him only a highly-developed set of phenomena flowering out from a hidden root—the unknowable unknown. What we call his personality, his will, his character, are all as unreal as the clouds of a summer noon—one moment apparently as fixed as mountain summits, and another dissolving as you gaze.

Character more important than knowledge.

A personal God alone gives energy and life to conscience.

Denial of the personality of God involves denial of the personality of man.

On any theory of man a personal God is needed to give energy to the moral ideal and to

proclaim it as his personal will. The other self within us is often powerless to enforce obedience. Much as we may respect its commands when forced to hear them, we can, alas, too easily shut our ears to its voice. But when this better self represents the living God, who, though greater than conscience, speaks through conscience, then conscience takes the throne of the universe, and her voice is that of the eternal king to which all loyal subjects respond with rejoicing assent, and with the exulting hope that the right will triumph they rejoice that God reigns in righteousness.

The better self.

But man is not always loyal either to conscience or to God. As a sinner against both, he has need of deliverance and hope. What he most needs and longs for is to be delivered from the narrowness of selfishness, the brutality of appetite, the fever of ambition, the meanness of envy, the fiendishness of hate, and the righteous displeasure of God against all these. When men know what they are, as measured by what they might have become, they cannot but be ashamed. When they review their failures after trial they cannot but despair. They find no rational ground in themselves for hope that they shall actually become better in the springs of feeling or the results of their life. If there is no God, or if they know of none who can show them what they

Man a sinner.

Needs deliverance and hope.

Experience of failure.

ought to be, and who can and will help them, and whom it is rational to ask to guide and help them, they are without hope of lasting and triumphant success. But if God has made Himself known in Christ in order to give us a living example of human excellence, and also to inspire us to make this excellence our own, and above all in order to remove every hindrance or doubt in the way—then we may hope, by trusting ourselves to this redeeming God, at last to be like Him. His life, His death, His words, His acts, His living self, are full of the inspiration of hope. That inspiration has wrought with mighty power through all the Christian generations. The more distinctly and lovingly Christ has made God to be known, the more confidently has man responded with hope that he shall be emancipated into likeness to God.

No hope of success without God

Christ the source of inspiration and hope.

From all these hopes the agnostic atheism cuts us off. It first weakens and shatters our ideal of excellence; next it denies the freedom by which we may rise; and finally it withdraws the inspiration which is ministered by our personal deliverer and friend. It weakens man's ideal. It cannot do otherwise, for it derives the law of duty from the changing feelings of our fellow-men. It degrades the law of duty into a shifting product of society, it resolves conscience with its rewards and penalties into the outgrowth

Effects of agnostic atheism.

of the imagined favour or dislike of men as unstable as ourselves when this is fixed and transmitted by hereditary energy. Such an ideal, or law, or tribunal, can be neither sacred nor quickening nor binding, because it has no permanence. To be a good or perfect man in one æon is not the same thing as to be a good man in another. It is altogether a matter of taste or fashion, and each age under the law of development sets a new fashion for itself.

The agnostic ideal has no permanence.

It also sets freedom aside. To reach any part of this ideal is the result of simple mechanism. Character is the joint product of inheritance and circumstances. Freedom, with its possibilities and its kindling power, is but a fancy and a shadow—the mocking phantom of man's romantic longings or the vain surmising of his idle regrets.

It sets freedom aside.

There is neither inspiration nor hope for such a man in the help of God. He certainly needs help from some one greater than himself. If his moral ideals are not fixed, and he has no freedom with which to follow or reject such as he has, he is like a man who is bidden to walk in the sand that fails beneath his tread, and whose limbs are at the same time frozen with paralysis. Or he is like a bird with stiffened wings when dropped into an exhausted receiver. God cannot encourage or help him. To him

Leaves no hope of Divine help.

there is no God, or none of whom he can know that He can or will give him aid.

He has no certain or fixed ideal to which to aspire. He has no freedom with which even to pray. He has no God to whom to pray. What better can such a man do than to give himself up to the passions and impulses of the moment, which at least may divert his thoughts from his degradation, or amuse his aimless and hopeless existence, or throw startling and lurid lights over the darkness of his despair.

Unbridled licence the last resort.

III. *Belief in God is the only condition of hope in the advancement of public and social morality, and consequently in social stability and progress.*

The universe in which we live represents two factors, the physical and moral. Both of these are apparent in social phenomena. If God is required as the ground of our hope in nature and in physical science, and also in the sphere of morals, how much more in that sphere in which nature and spirit meet together! Those who deny God or who assert that we cannot know Him, can give no reason for their faith and hope in human progress. Force and law alone, whether physical or moral, do not answer all our questions here. Social forces, too, are

Agnosticism can give no reason for faith and hope in human progress.

less easily discerned than those purely physical. Even if we could resolve these forces into material agencies, and assume that their laws can be expressed in mathematical formulæ, this would avail us but little, because the forces are so complex and subtle, less easily traced, less readily analyzed, and less confidently interpreted, and less readily turned into prophecy. But if we believe these forces to be largely spiritual and personal, and accept freedom in both man and God, then our only rational ground of hope for man's future is that the Eternal has His own plans concerning man's future well-being, and will fulfil them in a consummation of good.

God's plans the ground of hope for man's future.

The developments of the past, except as they reveal some plan of God, give no hope for the future. In the facts of the past there is no security that the movement of man is onward. Manifold phenomena in human history suggest fearful forebodings of degeneracy, depravity, and retrogression. Long periods of darkness and eclipse have gathered in gloomy folds over the human race. Sudden collapses of faith have spread like the plague. Fearful convulsions have opened like the chasms of an earthquake to swallow up the gathered fruits of culture and art. But so soon as we know that God rules over man for man's moral discipline, and that Christ is setting up a kingdom of righteousness

The past offers no security for future progress.

and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, then we lift up our hearts, and gather courage for man's future history. We find good reason to conclude that man will continue to make progress in the knowledge of whatever is true, and just, and honest, and of good report. We become well assured that the simple law of Christian love will in due time be expanded by Christian science into thousands and tens of thousands of those special precepts of Christian ethics, which future generations shall joyfully accept, and that these will be light as air in their facile applications to the varying conditions of human existence, and strong as links of iron to hold men to every form of duty. We triumph in the faith that the time will come when this unwritten law shall sound within every obedient soul as winningly and as lovingly as the evening breeze that rests on the wind harp, and shall thunder as terribly in the ear of the disobedient as the voice of God from Sinai.

The prospect held out by Christianity.

Such a faith in human progress is rational. It is true indeed that if God is personal and man is free, the relations of God to man may be more complicated, and less easily known than if man is material and God an unknowable and impersonal force. On the other hand, social science gains nothing, but loses much, in telling us that the laws of society are as fixed as the laws of

The Christian's hope in a human progress rational.

Faith in order and purpose necessary to a science of the future.

the planets, and that man is as plastic to their moulding as stardust or protoplasm are to the cosmic forces. For on either theory, if we are to have a science of the future, we must have faith in order and a purpose as the ground of our hope for that progress in which we confide. But order and purpose suppose a personal thinker. If we have no God, or a God whom we cannot know, we are without rational hope for that moral and social progress in which we all believe. We can only believe that men will make progress, because we desire it. The socialistic agnostic is a dogmatic sentimentalist, instead of a rational philosopher.

Order and purpose presuppose a personal thinker.

IV. *Atheism, whether positive or negative, gives no hope for the conduct or comfort of individual life.*

The believer in God alone has solid ground for hope touching his own life.

Each man's personal life is ever present to himself as the object of his hopes or fears. Shall this life be long or short? Shall it be bright or dark? Shall it be a failure or a success? The man who believes in God and trusts in His guidance, he, and he alone, has solid ground for hope. He knows God as a force acting by law, and he knows Him no less as a person acting in personal relations of influence and love. From both he gathers hope. He knows Him through

the forces of the universe which surround and confront him at every step, and he knows Him as the heavenly Father who animates and directs these forces in every single joy or sorrow. In both relations he is in harmony with him; with the first so far as he knows them, and with the God Himself who controls both the known and the unknown to his true well-being, and makes even his ignorance and mistakes a blessing.

He is in full harmony with God.

He knows and obeys God as revealed in nature. He believes most profoundly that He acts in the majestic forces of the universe and their unchanging laws. He recognizes the truth that both are everywhere present in the world of matter and of spirit. He watches these forces as they move, often seemingly like the summer cloud that broods lazily over the quiet earth at noon; sometimes like the cloud also in that it needs only to be touched by another as quiet as itself, and the thunderbolt and tornado will leap forth with destructive energy. But he does not limit His presence and his rule to physical agencies alone. He recognizes also His moral and spiritual forces and laws. Though the moral are less obtrusive, they are none the less sure; though slower in their working, they are none the less energetic. Their energy is even greater, resembling in this those subtler agents of matter which, though they glide into one another in secret hiding-

He believes that God acts in the forces and laws of nature.

He recognises the equal certainty of God's moral and spiritual forces.

places and under Protean phases, are for that very reason the more easily gathered for a fearful retribution.

Man in the midst of nature's forces and laws.

Within this vast enginery of force and law man stands in his weakness and his strength. The spectacle of this enginery is sublime, and every day is making it more magnificent, for every day reveals something new in force or law which manifests more of the thought and power of God. But while man continually finds his strength in his power to interpret by scientific thought the forces and laws which had been before unknown, he is in the same proportion made more and more sensible of his weakness in his augmented apprehension of what is unrevealed. He is beset with fear lest he shall make some

His question.

fatal mistake. Hence he asks earnestly, Is there nothing more in this wide universe than force and law? If there is nothing more, no man is so much to be pitied as he—the man of scientific knowledge and scientific imagination, for no man

His loneliness and helplessness on the negative supposition.

feels so lonely and helpless as he. He is alone! alone! as he muses upon the vastness of this great solitude, peopled though it be with the enormous agents that haunt and overmaster him with their presence, but are without a thought or care for his personal life. Could he but see behind these forces a personal being like himself, and capable of directing both force and law to

issues of blessings to men, how welcome would that knowledge be to his lonely heart. That God he may see and find if he will. He is suggested by his own personality, which is his nobler, nay, his essential self. He is demanded by the weakness and limitations of his own nature. Why should there not be a personal and living God behind this machinery of force and law which we call nature? Why should I not know a living spirit, as well as unknown force and definite law? and why should I not accept personality in God as the best explanation of both? There is, there must be such a Person; He fills this vast solitude by His immanent presence and His animating life. He directs the forces which I cannot control. While I dare not transgress any known manifestations of His will either in force or law, I can trust myself to His personal care even though I err from limited knowledge or foresight.

God may be found.

What natural theism thus suggests, Christian theism declares for man's guidance and comfort. The living God becomes our Father in heaven, the Guardian of our life, our ever-present Friend, who understands our most secret thoughts, our weakest fears, our blushing shame, our conscious guilt, and who can bring to each and to all the sympathy, and comfort, and guidance, of a personal friendship and an assured blessing. In what words of sublime condescension and moving

God according to Christian Theism.

The declarations of Christ.

pathos have these truths been declared: "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Ye are of more value than many sparrows. Take no thought for the morrow. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." These are words of Him who spake as never man spake. Nor did He speak them alone. He lived them in His life, exemplifying them in look and demeanour, and showing their import by His loving trust. The same revelations of God were confirmed by His resurrection and His ascending majesty as He went into the presence of His Father and our Father, of His God and our God. From that presence we hear the assuring words: "He that spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things. Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." In this faith in God as the guide of their personal life, Christian believers by myriads have lived and died. In this hope, and in this alone, can the living of this generation stand.

Illustrated by His life.

Confirmed by His resurrection.

Repeated from heaven.

V. *The man without God is without hope for a future life.*

No certainty of a future life to the man without God.

For such a man, at best, another life is simply possible. He has no rational assurance that it is certain. The universe is so vast and man's dwelling is so contracted; its inhabitants are so manifold, and one among them is of so little moment; the distances are so enormous, and man's power to traverse them is so limited; the histories of the prehistoric ages are so gigantic in their forgotten details, and yet the title of each chapter is but an inscription over millions of the dead, that men tremble before nature, as when a child looks upward on the face of an overhanging cliff, or peers over the edge of a yawning gulf.

Nature's insensibility.

Man shudders before nature's remorseless insensibility. He notices how little she makes of the dead, and how little she cares for the living —how she mocks at and trifles with sensibility and with life. An earthquake swallows up tens of thousands of living men. The jaws of the gulf that opened to receive them swing back to their place, and forthwith flowers adorn the ghastly seam, as if in mockery of the dead who are buried beneath. A great ship founders in the ocean, freighted with a thousand living souls. As they go down they raise one shriek of anguish that it would seem should rend the sky. But

the cry is over, and the waters roll over the place as smoothly as though those thousand lives were not sleeping in death below. Of another life there are no tidings and few suggestions, a possibility, or perhaps a probability, but no hope.

The possibility of a future life denied by many.

Nowadays even this possibility is denied by many, and the probability against such a life is hardened into a certainty, and men strive to prove that they are not immortal as men strive for a great prize. All the analogies of nature are interpreted to prove the extinction of man's being. Those who acknowledge no God but a mysterious force, those who deny to God personality and thought and affection and sympathy, most reasonably find no evidence in nature for a future life, for when they look upon her stony and inflexible face, they find all the evidence to be against it.

The awakening to the fact of God's existence and personality.

Let such a man awake to the fact that God is, that He lives a personal life, that nature is not so much His hiding-place as it is a garment of the revealing light; that the forces of nature are His instruments, and the laws of nature His steadying and eternal thoughts; that man is made after God's image, and can interpret His thoughts and commune with His living self; that life is man's school, every arrangement and lesson of which points to a definite end; that this end

is not accomplished here—then not only does there spring up in his heart the hope that this life shall be continued in another, but this hope becomes almost a certainty. But this hope is a certainty so long, and only so long, as this life is interpreted by the light of God's thought and God's personality. So long as this light continues to shine, every difficulty that would make against another life is turned into an argument in its favour, and every new doubt suggests the necessity of a new hope. Every roughness that has cast a shadow on the picture reflects a gleam of light, and the hard, inexpressive face of nature herself becomes radiant with promise and hope.

The effect of the awakening.

Now let God be seen to break forth from His hiding-place, and to manifest himself in the Christ who conquers death and brings the immortal life to light through His rising and ascension, and the hope that had been reached as a conclusion of assured conviction is shouted forth in the song of triumph, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

The effect of seeing God in Christ.

I know that this argument, which sustains the hope of another life, is set aside by the agnostics with the denial that another life is of any value

The value of a future life denied.

or that men care for it. The next step is to argue that it is weak and ignoble to expect or desire it. The next is to substitute for it an ideal existence in the lives of others by the continuance of our thoughts and activities in those of others, in whose lives we may expect to prolong our own. Let those accept this substitute for a future life who can, and find in it what satisfaction they may. They will certainly confess that this fancied contentment with personal annihilation falls immeasurably short of what men call hope, and preëminently of the Christian hope that is full of immortality.

The substitute for a future life.

The doctrine itself seems to us to be simply inhuman and unnatural, and to be refuted by the simplest practical test. If men do not care for a future life, how should they, and why do they, care for any future of the present life? If they do not dread annihilation, why do they not more frequently commit suicide? If the hope for a nobler future existence does not animate and inspire men as an original and inextinguishable impulse, how happens it that men cleave with such tenacity to the hope for a brief and perhaps ignoble hour in the present? Why is it so rare that even the most disciplined of modern philosophers is ready to exchange the briefest hour of personal being for the lauded immortality of thought or emotion in the person of another? It

The agnostic doctrine practically tested.

is not bravery, it is simple bravado to deny or weaken the longing for a future life which every man confesses and feels. The laboured apostrophes of George Eliot, and the studied declamations of John Morley over the entrancing prospect of annihilation, are silenced by the pithy confessions of Shakespeare in Hamlet. The very earnestness of the denial is but a confession of the strength of the desire. I know that when a man half or wholly denies that God is, or that God is anything to him, he must, to be consistent, deny in the next breath that there is a future life. I know that the temptation is very strong that he should then seek to persuade himself that he cares nothing for that life. But he cannot succeed. He must have hope for this life, and he must have hope for the future. And he needs to know God and to believe in God if he would have hope for either.

George Eliot and John Morley.

Denial of a future life involved in denial of God.

This, then, is our conclusion: That so far as man denies God, or denies that God can be known, he abandons hope of every kind—that intellectual hope which is the life of scientific thought; hope for his own moral progress; hope for the progress of society; hope for guidance and comfort in his personal life; and hope for that future life for which the present is a preparation. As he lets those hopes go one by one, his life loses its light and its dignity; morality

Abandonment of hope of every kind involved in denial of God.

loses its enthusiasm and its energy, science has no promise of success, sin gains a relentless hold, sorrow and darkness have no comfort, and life becomes a worthless farce or a sad tragedy neither of which is worth the playing, because both end in nothing. Sooner or later this agnostic without hope will become morose and surly, or sensual and self-indulgent, or avaricious and churlish, or cold and selfish, or cultured and hollow,—in a word, a theoretical or a practical pessimist, as any man must who believes the world as well as himself to be without any worthy end for which one man or many men should care to live. Possibly, under special advantages of culture, he may be a modern Stoic without the moral earnestness with which the ancient Stoic grimly confronted fate, or a modern Epicurean without the unconscious gaiety that Christianity has rendered for ever impossible; or he will grope through the world seeking the shadow of a religion that he knows can never give him rest, and a God whom he denies can ever be found. But in either case, the story of his life will be summed up in the fearful epitaph, "*He lived without God, and died without hope.*"

Effect on the agnostic.

Agnosticism is a topic of present interest, on both its speculative and its practical side. As a speculation, however, it is not new. It is as old

Agnosticism a topic of present interest.

as human thought. The doubts and misgivings from which it springs are older than the oldest fragment of human literature. The questions which it seeks to answer are as distinctly uttered in the book of Job as are the replies of sneering despair which are paraded in the last scientific periodical. Modern science and philosophy have not answered these questions. It may be doubted whether they have shed any light upon them. They have simply enlarged man's conceptions of the finite, and thus made it more easy for him to overlook or deny his power and his obligation to know the Infinite and the Self-existent. Culture and literature, to say the least, do not justify the modern contempt for positive faith. They simply widen our knowledge of human weakness and error, but most rashly conclude that every form of faith and worship is an attitude of blind wonder before the unknown, or a sentimental groping after what can never be found. These inferences are hasty and unwarranted, for the reason that modern culture and literature were never so enriched by the Christian faith, and never could find reasons so abundant for acknowledging Christ to be divine. And yet we must acknowledge that to the superficially educated and the hasty thinker, Agnosticism offers many attractions, because it answers so many questions by a simple formula, and gathers or disposes of

Its antiquity as a speculation.

What science and philosophy have done.

The effect of culture and literature.

Attractions of agnosticism to the superficial.

many phenomena under plausible generalizations, and above all, because it releases the conscience and the life from present obligations of duty. Hence its theories run like wildfire among the multitudes, whose superficial or unfinished culture and training, or whose moral preferences prepare them to receive it. With many persons these tendencies are comparatively harmless, at least for a time. The old traditions of duty and self-control, of decorum and worship, still remain, even though God and conscience are speculatively abandoned, and Christ is an unsolved enigma, and Christian hopes are harmless dreams, and the future life a questionable inheritance, and this life is a prize in a lottery, and the fervors and self-denials and self-conquests of the Christian life are innocent but vapid sentimentalities. With others, after a longer time, the God at first unknown is openly denied, and Christ is rejected with passionate scorn, and the inspiration and restraints of Christian sentiment are contemptuously abandoned. By others the theory is applied still further. Their motto is, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.* To one or another of these dangers very many are exposed, most of all to the danger that the energy of their faith may be weakened, and the fire of their zeal may be lowered, and the tone of their moral and spiritual life may be relaxed by sympathy with this

The popularity of its theories.

Its tendencies restrained by counteracting influences in many cases.

Ultimate results in others.

paralysis of faith, which is everywhere more or less prevalent.

The greatest calamity to a young man.

No calamity can befall a young man which is so serious as the loss of that fire and hopefulness and courage for this life and the future, which are so congenial to the beginning of his active life. Hence no sign of our times is more depressing than that so many refined and thoughtful young men so readily accept the suggestions of doubt, and take a position of indifference or irresponsibility in respect to the truths of Christian theism and the personal obligations which they enforce.

Warning to young men.

Against these tendencies would I warn young men earnestly, by the consideration that so fast and so far as God is unknown by any man, so fast and so far does hope depart from his soul: hope for all that a man should care to live for; hope for scientific progress, for his own moral welfare, for the progress of the race, for a successful life and for a happy immortality. Therefore do I declare to them as they soberly look back upon their past life, and wistfully look forward to the unknown future, that if they would live a life of cheerful, joyful, and buoyant hopefulness they must live a life that is controlled and hallowed and cheered by God's presence and by a constant faith in His forgiving goodness. All else that a man should care for is secured by this living hope in the living and ever-present God—intellectual

The conditions of a hopeful life.

What living hope in God secures.

success and satisfaction as he grows in all knowledge and culture, sure progress in moral goodness, prosperity in his efforts for the well-being of man, the kind direction of his earthly life, and the assurance and anticipation of the life which is immortal. "All things are yours; . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN,

Historically Considered.

BY THE

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

Babylonian, Indian, Iranian, Phœnician, Israelitish, Lydian, Phrygian, Chinese, and Egyptian history is surveyed, and the conclusion arrived at that the history of man may be traced from authentic sources a little beyond the middle of the third millennium before our era ; that man has existed in communities, under settled government, for about 4500 years. The primitive condition of man must be determined before the duration of the prehistoric period can be estimated.

The mythology of almost all nations, Scripture, and Babylonian documents represent primitive man as civilised. No traces of savage man have been found in what tradition makes the cradle of the human race. There is no evidence of savages ever having civilised themselves. The civilisation found in Egypt B.C. 2600 might have been reached in 500, or, at most, 1000 years, if primitive man began his history in a state of incipient civilisation. Assuming that there was a primitive language from which all others have been derived, there is no difficulty in conceiving that all the 4000 languages said to exist now have been developed within 5000 years. Nor do the existing diversities of physical type require us to assume a vast antiquity for man. The early Egyptian remains indicate five types. The rest may have been developed subsequently. The growth of population and the waste spaces of the earth, and the absence of architectural remains earlier than the third millennium B.C. are shown to be in favour of "the juvenility" of man. The conclusion is arrived at that the prehistoric period cannot be fairly estimated at much less than 1000 years. The uncertainty of the chronology of the period between the Flood and Abraham is pointed out. If the Flood be placed about B.C. 3600, there will be time for the state of things found in Egypt 1000 years later. Two thousand years may be added for the period between the Creation and the Flood.

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED.

I.

Antiquity of man. Two stages of the problem.

THE problem of the antiquity of man has to the historian two stages. In the first, it is a matter wholly within the sphere of historical investigation, and capable of being determined, if not with precision, at any rate within chronological limits that are not very wide, *i.e.*, that do not exceed a space of two or three centuries. In the further or second stage, it is only partially a historical problem; it has to be decided by an appeal to considerations which lie outside the true domain of the historian, and are to a large extent speculative; nor can any attempt be made to determine it otherwise than with great vagueness, and within very wide limits—limits that are to be measured not so much by centuries as by millennia.

1. Antiquity of historic man. 2. Antiquity of prehistoric man.

The two stages which are here spoken of correspond to two phrases which are in ordinary use—"Historic man" and "Prehistoric man." "Historic man" means man from the time that he has left contemporary written records of himself, which have in any shape come down to us, and are intel-

ligible. "Prehistoric man" means man anterior to this—man during the time that he wrote no records of himself, or none that are intelligible, or none that have reached our day. History proper deals with the later stage, the stage for which written records exist; but the historian has always to acknowledge a precedent time, to take it into account, and retrospectively glance at it.

Antiquity of historic man considered.

In pursuing the present inquiry, we shall, first of all, examine the question, to what length of time history proper goes back—for how many centuries or millennia do the contemporary written records of historic man indicate or prove his existence upon the earth?

Nations of the New World set aside.

And here, in the first place, the inquiry may be restricted to the nations of the Eastern Hemisphere. The New World, at the time of its discovery by Europe, possessed nothing that deserves the name of history. The picture-writings of the Atzecs were not records, but symbolic representations capable of being variously interpreted, and only supposed to become intelligible by the application to them of oral tradition.[1] Thus the native races of America, prior to the Spanish conquests, belong to the category of "prehistoric" and not of "historic man," and therefore do not come under our present head of inquiry.

Of the Old World we possess abundant records, thoroughly intelligible, which are universally ad-

[1] See Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, Vol. I., p. 82.

mitted to go back to a period not far short of three thousand years from the present time. One record, equally easy to read, carries back the origin of one nation, the Hebrews, at least two hundred years earlier. The Hebrews had at that time been living, according to their own belief, for more than four centuries under subjection to another much more powerful nation, the Egyptians, whose existence is thus thrown back to a date more than three thousand six hundred years from to-day. The native records of Egypt, which are not, however, allowed on all hands to be intelligible, confirm this view, and are even thought to indicate for the Egyptians a still higher antiquity. The cuneiform inscriptions of Babylonia and Assyria, the intelligibility of which is also disputed, in the opinion of those who profess to read them, begin about B.C. 2400. On the whole, it may be said to be the general opinion of scholars that history proper can be traced back a space of at least four thousand years; though the sceptics, who refuse to believe in hieroglyphic or cuneiform decypherment, would contract the period, and deny that any history exists, on which we can rely, or to which we can attach definite dates, earlier than about B.C. 1000 —the time of Sheshonk I. in Egypt, of Solomon in Judea, and of the Dorian conquests in Greece.

Minimum antiquity of nations of the Old World. 1. Generally accepted view. 2. Extreme sceptical view.

It is not our purpose to entrench ourselves within the lines traced out by Sir Cornewall Lewis

in his two principal works, *The Astronomy of the Ancients*, and *The Credibility of Early Roman History*. We desire to conduct the present inquiry in a fair, candid, and impartial spirit. We shall, therefore, accept hieroglyphical and cuneiform discovery as *facts accomplis;* we shall reject the extreme sceptical view, and we shall proceed to inquire what contemporary literature, or other valid authority, teaches as to the age of those nations of the Old World which are clearly the most ancient, and which alone dispute among themselves the palm of antiquity.

Extreme sceptical view set aside.

The most ancient nations.

These nations, according to the general consent of modern historical critics, are the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Israelites, the Iranians, the nations of Asia Minor, the Phœnicians, the Indians, and the Chinese.

Alleged antiquity of the Babylonians.

The highest antiquity to which any of these nations ever pretended would seem to be that which was claimed for themselves by the Babylonians. Their astronomers, they said, had observed the heavenly bodies for a space of above 450,000 years. Their first king had ascended the throne 467,581 years before the accession of Pul, or about B.C. 468,330. Babylon had had seven dynasties during this space. The first, consisting of ten kings, had reigned 432,000 years, or an average of 43,200 each. The next, in which there were eighty-six kings, had occupied the throne for 34,080 years,

which would give an average of 396 years to each. The remainder had filled a space not much exceeding 1500 years, and had had short reigns, not averaging so much as thirteen years apiece.

Generally rejected by critics.

Historical criticism has at all times rejected this chronology as incredible. There is no historian of repute who has not set aside the first dynasty as mythical, and but one[1] who has found anything historical in the second. Critics generally draw a sharp line between the second and third dynasties of Berosus, and regard the Babylonian history of this writer as properly commencing with his third or Median dynasty, about B.C. 2250, or (according to an amended reading) B.C. 2460.

No history accompanies the chronology.

It was pointed out long ago by Eusebius,[2] the Church historian, that no events were chronicled as belonging to the enormous space of 466,080 years, by which Babylonian chronology exceeded the ordinary reckoning, and that a chronology which is unsupported by facts of history is worthless.

The allegation, that sidereal observations had been made at Babylon for above 450,000 years is sufficiently met by the fact that when Aristotle commissioned his disciple, Callisthenes, to obtain for him the astronomical lore of Babylon, on Alexander's occupation of the city, the observations were found to extend, not to 450,000 years, but to 1903.

[1] The late Baron Bunsen.

[2] *Chron. Can.*, Pars. I. c. 2, s. 7.

Moderate chronology of the Babylonian monuments.

If we turn from the reports of what Babylonian writers of a comparatively late period declared concerning the antiquity of their nation, to the native records which modern research has recovered from the Mesopotamian regions, we shall find them favour a very moderate date for the commencement of Babylonian sovereignty. The earliest Babylonian date contained in a cuneiform document is that of 1635 years before the seventeenth year of Asshur-bani-pal, which gives for the first Elamitic invasion of Babylonia the year B.C. 2286. Only about five monumental kings can be placed in the period which preceded this conquest,[1] whence it would follow that the monuments require no earlier date for the commencement of the Chaldean monarchy than B.C. 2400. There is a tolerably near agreement between this date and the chronology of Berosus, if we reject his first and second dynasties as fabulous.

Earliest fixed date B.C. 2286.

Sanskritic Indians have no history till B.C. 1600, if even before B.C. 1200.

An antiquity, almost as remote as that claimed for themselves by the Babylonians, has sometimes been ascribed to the Sanskritic conquerors of India. But the latest researches of the best scholars are completely adverse to all such pretentions. M. François Lenormant, in his *Manual of Ancient Oriental History*, which is used widely as a text-book in France, assigns the first entrance of the Sanskritic Indians into the peninsula of Hindu-

[1] G. Smith, *History of Babylonia*, p. 10.

stan[1] to no earlier a date than B.C. 2500, and regards their *history* as commencing with the "War of the Ten Kings,"[2] somewhere between B.C. 1600 and B.C. 1500. Professor Max Müller scarcely goes back so far. In his *Ancient Sanskrit Literature* he lays it down[3] that four periods of composition may be traced in the Vedas, and that the earliest of these—the Chandas period—to which the most ancient of the Vedic hymns belong, covered the space between B.C. 1200 and B.C. 1000. Of authentic Indian history before this time he does not find in the native literature any trace.

Iranian history does not begin till B.C. 820.

The Iranians had in primitive times a close connection with the Sanskritic Indians, and the earliest glimpses that we obtain of them reach back to about the same date. But Iranic *history* cannot be regarded as commencing before B.C. 820, when the Medes first came into contact with the Assyrians. Portions of the Zendavesta may be six or seven centuries earlier; but Dr. Martin Haug, the best living Iranic scholar, does not postulate for the most ancient of the "Gathas" a higher antiquity than B.C. 1500.[4]

The Phœnicians have no history till B.C. 1050.

The Phœnicians are regarded by some writers as having migrated from the shores of the Persian Gulf to those of the Eastern Mediterranean about B.C. 2500. The mention of Sidon in the Book of

[1] *Manuel d'Histoire Ancienne*, Vol. III., p. 431.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 473–5. [3] Pages 301–5.
[4] *Essays on the Sacred Language, etc., of the Parsees*, p. 225.

Genesis certainly favours the view that their settlement in Syria was of early date; but we have nothing that can be called authentic history in connection with the Phœnician people much more remote than the reign of David in Judea, or B.C. 1050. The Egyptian monuments, which are copious for the space between B.C. 1600 and 1280, contain no distinct mention of them; and one important authority (Josephus[1]) places the foundation of Tyre —which was an event very early in the history of the nation—as late as B.C. 1252. It is not at all clear that the emigration from the Persian Gulf, if it be a fact, preceded B.C. 1500; and it is tolerably evident that the nation enjoyed no great distinction till two centuries later.

The Israelites only began to be a nation at the Exodus or about B.C. 1300.

The Israelites, as a nation, date from the exodus, which can scarcely be placed later than B.C. 1300, or earlier than B.C. 1600. The later date is the more probable. They believed that they had sojourned in Egypt 430 years, their forefather Jacob having entered the country about B.C. 1730. Before this, they possessed nothing beyond a family history. The chronology attached to this history placed the call of Abraham 215 years before the descent of Jacob into Egypt, or about B.C. 1945.

There were two nations of Asia Minor which claimed a considerable antiquity,—the Lydians and the Phrygians. The traditions of the Lydians

[1] *Ant. Jud.*, viii. 3.

gave them three dynasties before their conquest by Cyrus, and assigned to the third of these 170 years, to the second 505 years, and to the first an indefinite term.[1] The date for the accession of the second dynasty was B.C. 1229; that for the accession of the first cannot well have been lower than B.C. 1400. As for the Phrygians, they were thought by some to be the most ancient people in all the world.[2] They had a tradition of the deluge,[3] and believed their native monarchy to have been among the earliest instituted after that event. Of actual kings they could, however, mention no more than eight before their conquest by Cyrus, so that they did not carry back their own consecutive history beyond B.C. 820. If, however, the Trojans are to be accounted a branch of the Phrygians, the Phrygian nationality must be allowed to date from some four or five centuries before this, since the Homeric poems were probably composed about B.C. 1000, and the war which they celebrate implies a flourishing Trojan kingdom for some centuries previously.

Lydian history may mount to B.C. 1400; Phrygian to about the same time.

The first European inquirers into Chinese history came to the conclusion that China possessed an authentic and consecutive history commencing with the reign of a certain emperor Yaou, who ascended the throne in B.C. 2356. This opinion

Chinese history once thought to extend to B.C. 2356.

[1] Herod. i. 7–25. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 2.

[3] See *Bible Educator*, Vol. I., pp. 33–8.

maintained its ground for some 300 years; but recent investigations have thrown discredit upon the work which contained the earlier portion of their supposed history,[1] and have reduced the date for the commencement of the authentic Chinese annals from B.C. 2356 at any rate to B.C. 1154. It is not even certain that, when we have reached B.C. 1154, we are on safe ground. One important authority[2] maintains that "the legendary period of 1202 years from B.C. 2356 to B.C. 1154 is followed by a semi-mythical, semi-historical period, which lasts from B.C. 1154 to B.C. 781," and that it is not until this last-named date is reached that trustworthy history commences.[3]

But now not carried beyond B.C. 781, or at furthest B.C. 1154.

Astronomical grounds have been alleged[4] for carrying back the *origines* of the Chinese to the remote date of B.C. 15,000. As the grounds in question are entirely outside of the domain of history, they do not require any notice in this place.

Astronomical date of B.C. 15,000 rejected.

[1] See an Article contributed to the *Leisure Hour* by Dr. Edkins in 1876, and republished in the author's *Origin of Nations*, pp. 262—272.

[2] Mr. Mayers in his *Chinese Reader's Manual*, published 1874.

[3] Since the bulk of the above was in print, Professor Legge has kindly informed me that he regards Chinese history as "well authenticated" up to B.C. 1154, and that he does not altogether reject the authority of the "Book of History," which begins professedly in B.C. 2356. There is a prehistoric period anterior to this, reaching back as far as B.C. 3300; beyond which "there is nothing but mist." These views do not conflict with the final results arrived at in the present "Tract."

[4] By Dr. Gustav Schlegel in his *Uranographie Chinoise*.

We may remark, however, that the Chinese themselves do not claim an earlier origin for their astronomy than about B.C. 2000; and that the one eclipse of the sun, which they place about this date, having been examined into by the light of modern astronomical science, has been pronounced "unsatisfactory."

Antiquity of historic man in Egypt requires to be carefully examined.

There remains for consideration the question of the antiquity of "historic man" in Egypt. Driven from all their other positions, the advocates of an extreme antiquity for the human race, entrench themselves upon Egyptian soil, and maintain that there, at any rate, in the region fertilized by the life-giving Nile, man can be proved to have existed under settled government, and in a fairly civilized community, from a time removed almost seven millennia from the present day. There is no doubt that Egypt was among the earliest, if not the very earliest, of civilized communities. Sacred and profane testimony agree in the assertion of this fact. But the actual date to which Egyptian history ascends is a question of much difficulty and delicacy, very variously determined by those best acquainted with the data on which the problem depends, and no otherwise to be settled than by a careful consideration of all the data in our possession, and, where they differ, by a correct critical estimate of their relative value.

Three sets of data for Egyptian antiquity.

The data themselves are of three distinct kinds. They consist, first, of the accounts given by Egyp-

tian *ciceroni* to Greek travellers, who visited their country for the purpose of historic inquiry, and who were particularly curious to know how long the Egyptian monarchy had lasted; secondly, of the reported statements of a native historian of repute, Manetho, who, shortly after Alexander's conquest of the country, wrote its history for the benefit of the Greeks; and thirdly, of such scattered notices as have been recovered from Egyptian papyri and stone monuments.

1. Reports of Greek travellers.

The earliest Greek travellers in Egypt brought back with them accounts of an antiquity of settled government in that country, very much beyond that which the Egyptians of later times seem to have claimed. Solon was informed that the city of Saïs in the Delta had been founded eight thousand years before the date of his visit,[1] which was probably about B.C. 570. The Egyptian archives were represented to him as extending to at least a thousand years earlier.[2] Hecatæus and Herodotus[3] were inclined to believe that Egyptian history could be traced back without a break for 345 generations of men, or, according to the estimate of Herodotus, for 11,500 years. The accession of Manes, the supposed first king, was placed by Herodotus about B.C. 12,000. When Diodorus Siculus paid his visit to Egypt, in the reign of

[1] Plat. *Timæus*, p. 21 E (ed. Stallbaum).
[2] *Ibid.* [3] Herod. ii. 142, 143.

Augustus Cæsar, the Egyptian pretentions had been considerably abated; but still he received the impression that the reign of Manes belonged to a time anterior by above 4000 years to the date of his stay.

It is uncertain whether the statements which the Greek writers report, were really made by the responsible persons to whom they are attributed. Greek travellers, who never knew any other language than their own, must have communicated with the Egyptian priests by means of professional interpreters—a class of persons not likely to have been at all superior to the dragomen of the present day. Information filtered through this imperfect medium would naturally suffer by the process; and it is quite possible that the enormous antiquity reported by Solon, Hecatæus, and Herodotus, as claimed for Egypt by its priestly colleges, may have had its origin, not in the serious statements of those learned bodies, but in the mistakes or exaggerations of the persons who professed to convey their statements to the Hellenic inquirers.

May have been mistakes of professional interpreters.

No faith is placed at the present day in the vague estimates of Solon, Herodotus, or Diodorus. It is felt that they may readily have been imposed upon; and it is further felt that their authority, whatever might have been its value had it stood alone, is superseded by the two other sources of information on the subject which, as above remarked, are open to us.

Not now regarded as authoritative.

2. Statements of Manetho.

Manetho, an Egyptian priest, born at Sebennytus (now Semnoud) in the Delta, about B.C. 300, in the history of Egypt, which he wrote in Greek for the information of the Greeks under Ptolemy Philadelphus, professed to carry back the *origines* of Egypt to a date more than 30,000 years anterior to Alexander the Great. His scheme of mundane chronology is thus presented by Eusebius[1]:—

	YEARS.
1. Reigns of the gods	13,900
2. Reigns of heroes	1,255
3. Reigns of other kings ...	1,817
4. Reigns of 30 Memphites ...	1,790
5. Reigns of 10 Thinites ...	350
6. Reigns of Manes and heroes	5,813
7. Reigns of the 30 dynasties	5,000(?)
Total.....	29,925

Moderns discard six-sevenths of his scheme, but retain one-seventh.

The wonderful mixture of things human and divine in this list has generally been regarded as discrediting the greater portion of it; but modern critics, for the most part, unwilling to give up the whole, have drawn a line between the sixth heading and the seventh, content to surrender gods and heroes and Manes, and even three dynasties of (apparently) human kings, provided that they may retain the "thirty dynasties," beginning with Menes and ending with Nectanebo II. The number of years assigned to these dynasties by

[1] *Chron. Can.*, Pars. I. c. 20.

Manetho is very uncertain, but probably exceeded 5000. Thus, if Manetho is to be our guide, Egyptian *history* must be supposed to go back B.C. 5300, and "historic man" must be regarded as traceable upon the earth for more than 7000 years.

The reliance placed on his lists extraordinary and uncritical.

Why, in an age which has discredited the great mass of historical writers, when they cease to speak from their own knowledge, and report the traditions of their forefathers—an age which questions the existence of Homer, and makes Greek history begin with the First Olympiad, which views Roman history as credible only from the time of the Samnite wars, and which especially rejects dynastic lists unaccompanied by historical facts—Manetho should be made an exception to the ordinary rule, and upheld as well nigh infallible, is a matter hard of explanation. One would not willingly suppose that the extraordinary deference paid to his authority originated in a wish to convict the Bible of error; but it is difficult to assign any other reason.

Character of his (so-called) history.

For the character of Manetho's history, as it has come down to us, is exactly that which is put aside as worthless generally. Manetho, writing in the third century before Christ, professes to deliver to us an exact account of the number of the Egyptian dynasties, the length of time during which each dynasty occupied the throne, and (in most instances) the names and order of the kings, with the exact number of years that each reigned. He

carried his lists back to a date which he regarded as preceding his own time by more than 5000 years. But this extraordinarily long and perfect chronological scheme was, so far as appears, accompanied by only the merest pretence of an historical narrative. We transcribe a dynasty of Manetho's, with the events attached to it.[1]

SECOND DYNASTY OF NINE KINGS.

Specimen.		YEARS.	
	1. Bochus (Boethus)	38	The earth gaped near Bubastus, and many perished.
	2. Cechous (Cæechós)	39	Apis and Mnevis, and the he-goat at Mendes were accounted gods.
	3. Biophis (Binôthris)	47	It was decreed that women might exercise the sovereign power.
	4. Tlas	17	Nothing remarkable occurred.
	5. Sethenes ...	41	
	6. Chæres	17	
	7. Nephercheres ...	25	The Nile flowed for eleven days mixed with honey.
	8. Sesôchris ...	48	He was five cubits high and three broad.
	9. Cheneres ...	30	Nothing remarkable occurred.
	Total ...	302	

[1] See the *Chron. Can.* of Eusebius, Pars. I., c. 20, § 4; and compare Africanus ap. Syncell. *Chronograph.* pp. 54, 55.

If it be said that this is the account of an epitomiser, and that Manetho doubtless recorded many other facts as having occurred in the 302 years, the answer is, first, that it is the account of two independent epitomisers, and secondly, that we have no evidence of Manetho having mentioned any other facts. Both epitomisers give exactly the same account.

Manetho's numbers exaggerations of the numbers on the monuments.

Manetho's history is sometimes said to be authenticated by the monuments. How much, or rather how little, they authenticate it will be shown when we come to consider their evidence. At present we wish to note that Manetho constantly exaggerates his numbers beyond the data contained in the monuments.

Instances.

(*a*) Manetho allows for no contemporary dynasties. The monuments make it evident that several of his dynasties were contemporary.[1]

(*b*) Manetho makes no allowance for contemporary reigns within a dynasty. The monuments show that such reigns frequently occurred; *e. g.* in the nineteenth dynasty, Seti I. associated his son, Rameses II., when he was ten years old, probably in his own eleventh year, and reigned conjointly with him for about twenty years, after which Rameses continued to reign for about thirty-six years longer. Manetho assigns to the two

[1] Lenormant, *Manuel d'Histoire Ancienne*, Vol. I., pp. 348, 349, 356.

kings a space of 121 years; the monuments make the space about 77.

(*c*) Manetho habitually enlarges the duration of reigns. Out of thirty-seven cases, where we can compare his numbers with those of the Turin papyrus, he is in excess twenty-two times, and in deficiency only six times. His numbers for the thirty-seven reigns added together amount to 984 years; those of the Turin papyrus to 615 years.[1] Thus he is here considerably more than one-third in excess.

Manetho must throughout be tested by the monuments.

The result is, that no confidence can be placed in any one of Manetho's numbers, unless it be confirmed by the monuments—an unusual occurrence. Still less can any confidence be placed in his general scheme, his artificial arrangement of the Egyptian monarchs into exactly *thirty* dynasties, represented as consecutive. We must test Manetho at each step by the monuments, and accept his statements only so far as they obtain some sort of monumental confirmation. In this way only can we acquire any reasonable estimate of the probable antiquity of the monarchy which grew up, certainly at a very early date, in the valley of the Nile.

Evidence of the monuments. 1. For the New Empire.

Now the monuments are fairly complete, and consecutive from a time which Manetho called the commencement of the New Empire, and made to synchronise with the accession of his eighteenth

[1] See the Author's *History of Egypt*, Vol. II., pp. 511–3.

dynasty. From this period, which is well marked upon the remains, we have a list of sixty-three kings, nearly the same number as that given by Manetho. The reigns of many are short, and some ruled conjointly; but we cannot well assign to them a less space than 1000 or 1100 years, which would carry back the foundation of the New Empire to B.C. 1527 or B.C. 1627. Beyond this the monuments show many gaps, and are, comparatively speaking, scanty. We have no contemporary records of Manetho's first three dynasties, nor of his seventh, eighth, ninth, nor tenth; nor again of his fourteenth, fifteenth, or sixteenth. The earliest Egyptian monument is one of Snefru, first king of Manetho's fourth dynasty. This is followed by the Pyramids and the long series of contemporary tombs at Ghizeh, belonging to the later kings of the same dynasty. Monuments continue numerous under the fifth dynasty and the sixth. They are then absolutely wanting until the eleventh, which has left a few. For the twelfth they are abundant. The main witness for the thirteenth is the Turin papyrus, which is, however, confirmed by a certain number of inscriptions; but, after this, inscriptions fail until quite the end of Manetho's seventeenth dynasty. Thus, out of Manetho's first seventeen dynasties, the only ones for which we have the evidence of contemporary monuments are the fourth, fifth, and sixth; the eleventh, twelfth, and

2. For the Old Empire.

3. For the Middle Empire.

thirteenth; and the seventeenth. The point for consideration now is, how much time we are bound to allow for these.

Probable duration of the Middle Empire.

Manetho made three dynasties of Hyksôs, or Shepherd Kings, his fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth, and assigned to them a period which is variously stated at 511 and at 953 years.[1] The monuments recognise one dynasty only, and are incompatible with its having held the dominion of Egypt for more than two, or at most three, centuries. Canon Cook has shown strong grounds for assigning to the Hyksôs period, or "Middle Empire," no longer a space of time than 250 years.[2] It may be questioned whether two centuries would not be a better estimate, since the dynasty was one of only five or six kings. The Middle Empire may, therefore, be regarded as having commenced about B.C. 1727 or 1827.

Probable duration of the Old Empire.

The monumental dynasties of the Early Empire are six in number. The first of them, Manetho's fourth, consisted of either five or six kings, whose united reigns amounted, according to Manetho, to 268 years; according to the Turin papyrus, to 102. The second, Manetho's fifth, comprised seven kings, whose united reigns covered a space of about 120 years. The third, Manetho's sixth,

[1] Josephus says 511 (*Contr. Ap.* i. 14), Africanus (ap. Syncell. *Chron.* p. 60 B) 953.

[2] See the *Speaker's Commentary*, Vol. I., pp. 447, 448.

contained five or six monarchs, and may be allowed about the same duration. The fourth, Manetho's eleventh, consisted of either six or eight kings, and probably held the throne for about a century and a half. The fifth, Manetho's twelfth, was a dynasty of great importance. It numbered nine sovereigns, and ruled for about 190 years. The sixth, Manetho's thirteenth, comprised numerous kings, who reigned on an average about three years apiece. The earlier monarchs of the list may have been independent; but the later ones were probably tributary to the Shepherds, and contemporary with them. We need not allow the dynasty more than 100 years of independent rule.

Commencement of Egyptian monarchy about B.C. 2500 or 2650.

The result is, that for the "Old Empire" we must allow a term of about seven centuries, or seven centuries and a half; whence it follows that we must assign for the commencement of Egyptian monarchy about the year B.C. 2500, or from that to B.C. 2650. This is the furthest date to which "History Proper" can be said, even probably, to extend. It is capable of some curtailment, owing to the uncertainty which attaches to the real length of the earlier dynasties, but such curtailment could not be very considerable.

History therefore goes back about 4500 years.

The history of man may then be traced from authentic sources a little beyond the middle of the third millennium before our era. It is true and safe to say that man has existed in communities under

settled government for about four thousand five hundred years; but it would not be safe to say that he had existed in the condition which makes history possible for any longer term.

II.

Antiquity of prehistoric man.

THE first stage of the inquiry here ends. It remains that we address ourselves to the second and more difficult question—What is the probable age of "prehistoric man," for how long a time is it reasonable to suppose that mankind existed on the earth before states and governments grew up, before writing was invented, and such a condition of the arts arrived at as we find prevailing in the time when history begins, *e.g.*, in Egypt at the Pyramid period, about B.C. 2600, and in Babylonia about two centuries later?

Opinion of Professor Owen.

Professor Owen is of opinion that the space of "7000 years is but a brief period to be allotted to the earliest civilized and governed community"[1]—that of Egypt; nay, he holds that such a period of "incubation," as he postulates, is so far from extravagant that it is "more likely to prove inadequate" for the production of the civilization in question.[2] This is equivalent to saying that we

[1] See an "Address" delivered to the International Congress of Orientalists in 1874, reported in the *Times* of September 21 of that year.

[2] See the Author's *Origin of Nations*, p. 260.

must allow 2,500 years for the gradual progress of man from his primitive condition to that whereto he has attained when the Pyramid kings bear sway in the Nile valley. Other writers have proposed a still longer term, as 10,000, 15,000 or even 20,000 years.[1]

Of Baron Bunsen.

Now, here it must be observed, in the first place, that no estimate can be formed which deserves to be accounted anything but the merest conjecture, until it has been determined what the primitive condition of man was. To calculate the time occupied upon a journey, we must know the point from which the traveller set out. Was then the primitive condition of man, as seems to be supposed by Professor Owen, savagery, or was it a condition very far removed from that of the savage?

Question of the primitive condition of man.

"The primeval savage" is a familiar term in modern literature; but there is no evidence that the primeval savage ever existed. Rather, all the evidence looks the other way. "The mythical traditions of almost all nations place at the beginnings of human history a time of happiness and perfection, a 'golden age,' which has no features of savagery or barbarism, but many of civilization and refinement."[2] The sacred records, venerated alike by Jews and Christians, depict antediluvian man as from the first "tilling the ground," "building cities," "smelting metals," and "making

The primitive condition of man not savagery.

Proofs.

[1] Bunsen's *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, Vol. v., p. 103.

[2] See the Author's *Origin of Nations*, pp. 10, 11.

musical instruments." Babylonian documents of an early date tell, similarly, of art and literature having preceded the Great Deluge, and having survived it.[1] The explorers who have dug deep into the Mesopotamian mounds, and ransacked the tombs of Egypt, have come upon no certain traces of savage man in those regions, which a wide-spread tradition makes the cradle of the human race. So far from savagery being the primitive condition of man, it is rather to be viewed as a corruption and a degradation, the result of adverse circumstances during a long period of time, crushing man down, and effacing the Divine image wherein he was created.

No emerging from savagery except by contact with civilization.

Had savagery been the primitive condition of man, it is scarcely conceivable that he could have ever emerged from it. Savages, left to themselves, continue savages, show no sign of progression, stagnate, or even deteriorate. There is no historical evidence of savages having ever civilized themselves, no instance on record of their having ever been raised out of their miserable condition by any other means than by contact with a civilized race. The torch of civilization is handed on from age to age, from race to race. If it were once to be extinguished, there is great doubt whether it could ever be re-lighted.

Degrees of civilization.

Doubtless, there are degrees in civilization. Arts

[1] Berosus, Fr. 7; Abydenus, Fr. 1.

progress. No very high degree of perfection in any one art was ever reached *per saltum*. An "advanced civilization"—a high amount of excellence in several arts implies an antecedent period during which these arts were cultivated, improvements made, perfection gradually attained. If we estimate very highly the civilization of the Pyramid period in Egypt, if we regard the statuary of the time as equalling that of Chantrey,[1] if we view the Great Pyramid as an embodiment of profound cosmical and astronomical science,[2] or even as an absolute marvel of perfect engineering construction, we shall be inclined to enlarge the antecedent period required by the art displayed, and to reckon it, not so much by centuries, as by millennia. But if we take a lower view, as do most of those familiar with the subject—if we see in the statuary much that is coarse and rude, in the general design of the Pyramid a somewhat clumsy and inartistic attempt to impress by mere bulk, in the measurements of its various parts and the angles of its passages adaptations more or less skilful to convenience, and even in the "discharging chambers" and the "ventilating shafts" nothing very astonishing, we shall be content with a shorter term, and regard the supposed need of millennia as an absurdity.

Civilization of the Pyramid period not very high.

There is in truth but one thing which the Egyp-

[1] Professor Owen in the author's *Origin of Nations*, p. 258.
[2] Piazzi Smith's *Antiquity of Intellectual Man*.

tians of the Pyramid period could really do surprisingly well; and that was, to cut and polish hard stone. They must have had excellent saws, and have worked them with great skill, so as to produce perfectly flat surfaces of large dimensions. And they must have possessed the means of polishing extremely hard material, such as granite, syenite, and diorite. But in other respects their skill was not very great. Their quarrying, transport, and raising into place of enormous blocks of stone is paralleled by the Celtic builders of Stonehenge, who are not generally regarded as a very advanced people. Their alignment of their sloping galleries at the best angle for moving a sarcophagus along them may have been the result of "rule of thumb." Their exact emplacement of their pyramids so as to face the cardinal points needed only a single determination of the sun's place when the shadow which a gnomon cast was lowest.

Might have been reached by primitive man, if clever and intelligent, within 500 or 1000 years.

Primitive man, then, if we regard him as made in the image of God—clever, thoughtful, intelligent, from the first, quick to invent tools and to improve them, early acquainted with fire and not slow to discover its uses, and placed in a warm and fruitful region, where life was supported with ease—would, it appears to the present writer, not improbably have reached such a degree of civilization as that found to exist in Egypt about B.C. 2600. within five hundred or, at the utmost, a thousand

years. There is no need, on account of the early civilization of Egypt, much less on account of any other, to extend the "prehistoric period" beyond this term.

The rudeness of remains found in cairns, caves, lake-beds, etc., no proof of a high antiquity.

Mere rudeness of workmanship and low condition of life generally is sometimes adduced as an evidence of enormous antiquity; and the discoveries made in cairns, and caves, and lake-beds, and kjökkenmöddings are brought forward to prove that man must have a past of enormous duration. But it seems to be forgotten that as great a rudeness and as low a savagism as any which the spade has ever turned up still exists upon the earth in various places, as among the Australian aborigines, the Bushmen of South Africa, the Ostiaks and Samoyedes of Northern Asia, and the Weddas of Ceylon. The savagery of a race is thus no proof of its antiquity. As the Andaman and Wedda barbarisms are contemporary with the existing civilization of Western Europe, so the palæolithic period of that region may have been contemporary with the highest Egyptian refinement.

Argument from the diversities of human speech.

Another line of argument sometimes pursued in support of the theory of man's extreme antiquity, which is of a semi-historic character, bases itself upon the diversities of human speech. There are, it is said,[1] four thousand languages upon the earth, all of them varieties, which have been produced

from a single parent stock—must it not have taken ten, fifteen, twenty millennia to have developed them?

Argument answered.

Now here, in the first place, exception may be taken to the statement that "all languages have been produced from a single parent stock," since, if the confusion of tongues at Babel be a fact, as allowed by the greatest of living comparative philologists,[1] several distinct stocks may at that time have been created. Nor has inductive science done more as yet than indicate a *possible* unity of origin to all languages, leaving the fact in the highest degree doubtful.[2] But, waiving these objections, and supposing a primitive language from which all others have been derived, and further accepting the unproved statement, that there are 4000 different forms of speech, there is, we conceive no difficulty, in supposing that they have all been developed within the space of five thousand years. The supposition does not require even so much as the development of one new language each year. Now, it is one of the best attested facts of linguistic science, that new languages are being formed continually. Nomadic races without a literature, especially those who have abundant leisure, make a plaything of their language, and are continually changing its

[1] Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, First Series, p. 125.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 318–327.

vocabulary. "If the work of agglutination has once commenced," says Professor Max Müller,[1] "and there is nothing like literature or science to keep it within limits, two villages, separated only for a few generations, will become mutually unintelligible." Brown, the American missionary, tells us of some tribes of Red Indians who left their native village to settle in another valley, that they became unintelligible to their forefathers in two or three generations. Moffatt says that in South Africa the bulk of the men and women of the desert tribes often quit their homes for long periods, leaving their children to the care of two or three infirm old people. "The infant progeny, some of whom are beginning to lisp, while others can just master a whole sentence, and those still further advanced, romping together through the live-long day, become habituated to a language of their own. The more voluble condescend to the less precocious, and thus from this infant Babel proceeds a dialect of a host of mongrel words and phrases, joined together without rule, and in the course of one generation the entire character of the language is changed."[2] Castren found the Mongolian dialects entering into a new phase of grammatical life, and declared that "while the literary language of the race had no

[1] In Bunsen's *Philosophy of Universal History*, Vol. III., p. 483.

[2] See Max Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Language*, First Series, pp. 53, 54.

terminations for the persons of the verb, that characteristic feature of Turanian speech had lately broken out in the spoken dialects of the Buriatic and in the Tungusic idioms near Njestschinsk in Siberia."[1] Some of the recent missionaries in Central America, who compiled a dictionary of all the words they could lay hold of with great care, returning to the same tribe after the lapse of only ten years, "found that their dictionary had become antiquated and useless."[2] When men were chiefly nomadic, and were without a literature, living moreover in small separate communities, linguistic change must have proceeded with marvellous rapidity, and each year have seen, not one new language formed, but several.

Another form of the linguistic argument.

The linguistic argument sometimes takes a different shape. Experience, we are told, furnishes us with a measure of the growth of language, by which the great antiquity of the human race may be well-nigh demonstrated. It took above a thousand years for the Romance languages—French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Wallachian, and Roumansch, or the language of the Grisons—to be developed out of Latin. Must it not have taken ten times as long to develop Latin and its sister tongues—Greek, German, Celtic, Lithuanian, Sclavonic, Zend, Sanskrit—out of their mother speech?

[1] See Max Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Language*, First Series, p. 53. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Nor was that mother speech itself the first form of language. Side by side with it, when it was a spoken tongue, must have existed at least two other forms of early speech, one the parent of the dialects called Semitic—Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Phœnician, Assyro-Babylonian, etc.—the other bearing the same relation to the dialects of the nomad races scattered over Central and Northern Asia—the Tungusic, Mongolic, Turkic, Samoyedic, and Finnic—which are all "radii from a common centre,"[1] and form a well-established linguistic family. But these three mighty streams, which we may watch rolling on through centuries, if not millennia, distinct and separate one from another, are not wholly unconnected. If we trace them back as far as the records of the past allow, we shall find that "before they disappear from our sight in the far distance, they clearly show a convergence towards one common source."[2] Widely different, therefore, as they are both in grammar and vocabulary, they too must have had a common parent, have been developed out of a still earlier language, which stood to them in the relation that Latin bears to Italian, Spanish, and French. But in what a length of time? If the daughter languages of the Latin were only developed in the space of a thousand years, and Latin,

[1] Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, First Series, p. 33. [2] *Ibid.*

with its sister tongues, required ten or twenty times as long to be developed out of the primitive Aryan speech, how much longer a time must have been needed for the formation from one common stock of the primitive Aryan, the primitive Semitic, and the primitive Turanian types! When from reasoning of this kind—regarded as valid—the conclusion is deduced, that "twenty-one thousand years is a very probable term for the development of human language in the shortest line," [1] we can only feel surprise at the moderation of the reasoner.

The reasoning invalid.

But the reasoning is invalid on several grounds. *(a)* The supposed induction is made from a single instance—the case of Latin and its daughter tongues. To prove the point, several cases parallel to that of Latin should have been adduced. *(b)* The time which it took for Latin to develop into Italian, Spanish, Wallachian, etc., assumed to be known, is not known. No one can say when Italian was first spoken. All that we know is, when it came to be a literary language. The fact seems to be that the Gauls and Spaniards, even the provincial Italians, learnt Latin imperfectly from the first, clipped it of its grammatical forms, corrupted its vocabulary, introduced phonetic changes consonant with their own habits and organs of speech. Languages nearer to Spanish and Italian than to classical Latin were probably spoken gene-

[1] Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, Vol. IV., p. 563.

rally in Spain and Italy, while Latin was still the language of the capital and of polite society. *(c)* Linguistic development is not, in fact, equal in equal times. On the contrary, there are periods when changes are slow and gradual, while there are others when they take place with extraordinary rapidity. English altered between Chaucer and Shakspeare very greatly more than it has changed between Shakspeare and the present day. Changes are greatest and most rapid before there is a literature; consequently, in the early stages of a language's life. And they are facilitated by the absence of intercourse and isolation of tribe from tribe, which is the natural condition of mankind before states have been formed and governments set up. In the infancy of man linguistic change must almost certainly have progressed at a rate very much beyond that at which it has moved within the period to which history reaches back.

Varying rates of progress in linguistic changes.

It is as impossible, therefore, to measure the age of language by the period—supposing it known—which a given change occupied, as it would be to determine the age of a tree by the rate of growth noted at a particular time in a particular branch.

The diversities of physical type have also been viewed as indicating a vast antiquity for man, more especially when taken in connection with supposed proof that the diversities were as great 4000 years ago as they are now. The main argument here is

Argument from the diversities of human physical type.

one with which history has nothing to do. It is for physiologists, not for historians, to determine how long it would take to develope the various types of humanity from a single stock. But the other point is an historical one, and requires to be considered here. Now, it is decidedly not true to say that all, or anything like all, the existing diversities of physical type can be traced back for 4000 years, or shown to have existed at the date of B.C. 2100. The early Egyptian remains indicate, at the most, five physical types—those of the Egyptians themselves, the Cushites or Ethiopians, the Nahsi or Negroes, the Tahennu or Lybians, and the Amu or Asiatics. The Egyptians are represented as of a red-brown colour, but their women as nearly white. They have Caucasian features, except that their lips are unduly thick. The Ethiopians have features not dissimilar, but are prognathous and much darker than the Egyptians, sometimes absolutely black. The negroes are always black, with crisp, curly hair, snub noses, and out-turned lips; but they are not represented until about B.C. 1500. The Tahennu or Lybians of the North African coast have features not unlike the Egyptians themselves, but are fair-skinned, with blue eyes and lightish hair. The Amu have features like those of the Assyrians and Jews: they vary in colour, being sometimes reddish, sometimes yellow, and having hair which is sometimes light, sometimes

Argument answered.

dark. The diversities are thus considerable, but they are far from equalling those which now exist. And it may be suspected that each type is exaggerated. As there cannot have been the difference of colour between the Egyptian men and the Egyptian women which the monuments represent, so it is to be supposed that in the other cases the artists intensified the actual differences. The Ethiopian was represented darker than he was, the Lybian lighter; the negro was given crisper and bushier hair, a snubber nose, and thicker lips. Art, in its infancy, marks differences by caricaturing them. We must not argue from caricatures, as if they had been photographs.

Conclusion.

We are not obliged, then, to relegate the entire development of existing physical types to the prehistoric period, and on that account to give it, as has been proposed, a vast enlargement. History shows us five types only as belonging to its first period. The rest may have been developed subsequently.

III.

Positive arguments for the juvenility of man.

Further, there are a certain number of positive arguments which may be adduced in favour of the "juvenility" of man, or, in other words, of his not having existed upon the earth for a much longer period than that of which we have historical evidence. As, first, the population of the earth.

The population of the earth.

Considering the tendency of mankind to "increase and multiply," so that, according to Mr. Malthus,[1] population would excepting for artificial hindrances, double itself every twenty-five years, it is sufficiently astonishing that the human race has not, in the space of 5000 years, exceeded greatly the actual number, which is estimated commonly at a thousand millions of souls. The doubling process would produce a thousand millions from a single pair in less than eight centuries. No doubt, "hindrances" of one kind or another would early make themselves felt. The difficulty of obtaining subsistence would either defer marriage or introduce the practice of infanticide. War, famine, pestilence would, from time to time, sweep off whole nations, and would act as a continual check and drag upon the rate of increase. In civilised communities regard for social position would induce self-restraint among one class, while profligacy and vice would exhaust the physical powers, and so hinder reproduction in another. But, notwithstanding all these obstacles, population, it is plain, still grows; every year sees the earth more thickly peopled; in almost every country where a census of the inhabitants is, from time to time, carefully taken, some increase is noted. In our own country the total has risen from twenty-five to thirty-five millions within the writer's life-time. Is it con-

Population grows in spite of hindrances.

[1] *Essay on Population*, Vol. I., pp. 6–8.

ceivable that, if man had occupied the earth for the "one hundred or two hundred thousand years" of some writers,[1] or even for the "twenty-one thousand" of others,[2] he would not by this time have multiplied far beyond the actual numbers of the present day? No one can doubt that the earth is capable of nourishing ten times its existing number of inhabitants. Give man the "vast and profound antiquity" proposed,[3] and what has hindered him from reaching that point of equilibrium between his numbers and the food-producing capacity of the globe, to which, if continued in existence, he must ultimately attain?

Why has equilibrium between population and the food-producing powers of the earth not been long ago attained?

Secondly, does not the fact that there are no architectural remains dating back further than the third millennium before Christ indicate, if not prove, the (comparatively) recent origin of man? Man is as naturally a building animal as the beaver. He needs protection from sun and rain, from heat and cold, from storm and tempest. According to Scripture, the son of the first man who was born into the world "builded a city;" and the waters of the flood were scarcely subsided when the cry arose, "Let us build us a city and a tower." Brick is easily made; stone of many kinds is not difficult to hew. Can man have been long upon

Argument from absence of architectural remains before the third millennium before Christ.

[1] Morgan, *Ancient Society*, Preface, p. v.
[2] Bunsen, *Egypt's Place*, Vol. IV., pp. 563, 564.
[3] Morgan, l. s. c.

the earth before he began to raise structures of some considerable size and solidity? Nay, can it have been *very* long before he conceived the idea of "making himself a name" (Gen. xi. 4), by erecting a building which would endure, and carry down his memory to future ages? It is true that from the moment that man produces an architectural work decay sets in. "Tempus, edax rerum;" and the earlier essays of humanity in architecture have doubtless perished. But there are countries and climates where time's power is reduced to a minimum, and the gnawing of his tooth *almost* defied. How is it that Egypt and Babylonia do not show us pyramids and temple towers in all the various stages of decay, reaching back further and further into the night of ages, but start, as it were, with works that we can date, such as the Pyramids of Ghizeh, and the *ziggurat* of Urukh at Mugheir? Why has Greece no building more ancient than the treasury of Atreus, Italy nothing that can be dated further back than the flourishing period of Etruria (B.C. 700-500)? Surely, if the earth has been peopled for a hundred thousand, or even twenty thousand years, man should have set his mark upon it more than five thousand years ago.

Argument from the waste places of the earth.

Again, if man is of the antiquity supposed, how is it that there are still so many waste places upon the earth? What vast tracts are there, both in

North and South America, which continue to this day untouched primeval forests? The Amazon and its tributary streams water a region which is as large as Russia in Europe, of this description. Others are to be found on the Colorado and the Mississippi, and also in the vast expanse which lies between Upper Canada and the Pacific Ocean. Again, what millions of acres are there in Russia in Asia, well suited for agriculture, over which there now roam only a few thousands of nomads! The entire Russian possessions in this quarter, though estimated to contain more than five millions of square miles, have a population of under four millions of souls. Must not man have thrust himself into these regions ere now in crowd upon crowd, and have settled down there in agricultural communities, were he not, comparatively, a new comer upon the earth? Like a boat's crew, cast but lately on a desert isle, he has not one-half examined, much less taken possession of, his inheritance.

Argument from Divine wisdom and benevolence.

Finally, we venture to ask, which is worthier of the Divine Wisdom and Benevolence, that man should have commenced his being in a civilized condition—albeit the form of the civilization was simple and incipient—and should have retained that position, gradually improving it, though here and there falling off into savagery, for some five or six thousand years, or that the subjoined view,

Recent speculation on the subject.

which is the outcome of recent speculation on the subject, should be true:—

> "If we assume a hundred thousand years as the measure of man's existence upon the earth in order to find the relative length of each period, . . . it will be seen at once that *at least sixty thousand years must be assigned to the period of savagery*. Three-fifths of the life of the most advanced portion of the human race, on this apportionment, was spent in savagery. Of the remaining years, *twenty thousand*, or one-fifth, *should be assigned to the Older Period of barbarism. For the Middle and Later Periods* [*of barbarism*] *there remain fifteen thousand years*, leaving five thousand, more or less, for the period of civilization. The relative length of the period of savagery is more likely under than over stated." [1]

Sixty thousand years of savagery, and thirty-five thousand years of barbarism, which is nearly the same thing—to five thousand years, "more or *less*," of civilization, is scarcely satisfactory.

IV.

General results, and consequences involved in them.

THE results arrived at seem to be that, while history carries back the existence of the human race for a space of 4,500 years, or to about B.C. 2600 (p. 23), a prehistoric period is needed for the production of the state of things found to be then existing, which cannot be fairly estimated at much less than a millennium (p. 28). But if a continuous space of 5,500 years be thus required for man's passage into his present position, some alteration

[1] Morgan, *Ancient Society*, pp. 38, 39.

will need to be made in our customary and traditional beliefs. Either the Flood must be regarded as partial, and especially as not having affected Egypt, or the ordinary chronology of the period between Noah and the Call of Abraham must receive some expansion. But the universality of the Flood can scarcely be called in question without doing violence to the entire account given in Genesis vi.—ix., as well as to certain passages of the New Testament, as especially Matt. xxiv. 37—39, and 2 Pet. ii. 5. It is moreover supported by a most widely-spread—an almost universal tradition. The supposed chronology of the period between the Flood and Abraham contains, on the contrary, various elements of uncertainty within itself, and has no support of external evidence. In the first place, it is composed of a series of numbers, no one of which is repeated or otherwise checked by the context. In the second place, among the numbers a very undue proportion are round, and therefore probably inexact. Thirdly, in the three ancient versions of the Old Testament which have come down to us—the Hebrew, the Samaritan, and the Septuagint—the numbers are widely different. According to the Hebrew Bible, the sum total of the years between the Flood and the Call of Abraham was 427; according to the Samaritan it was 1002; according to the Septuagint it was 1132. Supposing the Call to have taken place

about B.C. 2000, the Hebrew date for the Deluge would be B.C. 2427; the Samaritan, B.C. 3002; the Septuagint, B.C. 3132. Even the earliest of these dates seems, however, to be insufficient. May we not, therefore, regard it as highly probable that the numbers have suffered corruption *in all the three versions*, and that the real space between the Deluge and Abraham exceeded even the Septuagint estimate?

Proposed date for the Flood, B.C. 3600.

If the Flood is placed about B.C. 3600, there will be ample time for the production of such a state of society and such a condition of the arts as we find to have existed in Egypt a thousand years later, as well as for the changes of physical type and language which are noted by the ethnologist. The geologist may add on 2000 years more for the interval between the Deluge and the Creation, and may perhaps find room therein for his "palæolithic" and his "neolithic" periods.

THE WITNESS OF PALESTINE

TO

THE BIBLE.

BY

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

The unique interest of Palestine is pointed out. The Bible is a historical record of God's revelation of Himself in grace. The history and God's supernatural revelation stand or fall together. The witness of the land is appealed to as one means of establishing the reality of the facts; a Divine command the only sufficient explanation of the facts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's conduct in relation to the land. The peculiar adaptation of the land for the fulfilment of God's purposes respecting Israel is pointed out; its isolation, and yet its central position. The adaptation of the structure of the country to the work of Joshua is traced. Only three interventions of supernatural power took place in Joshua's campaign, and then only when no other means could accomplish the end designed. The relation of the Jordan valley to the history is shown; the allotments to the tribes, the position of Judah in particular, and the situation of Jerusalem, are remarkable in their bearing on the national history. The truthfulness of the most casual references to Galilee in New Testament history is pointed out. The references to climate and geological structure also correspond with the facts of observation. Assyrian and Egyptian monuments confirm the history. All the ascertained facts confirm the truth of the Bible, and demand the supernatural for their explanation. The fulfilment of the strong predictions concerning various countries proves their reality. The present state of the Jews and of Palestine seems to point to the fulfilment of prophecy respecting their return to their own land.

THE WITNESS OF PALESTINE TO THE BIBLE.

Interest attaching to Palestine.

No plot of ground exists on the surface of the earth that has had a more remarkable history or a more fascinating influence than the strip of Syrian limestone which we call the Land of Israel. Not Egypt, though the mysterious monuments of its wisdom and greatness make us feel little in their presence even to-day. Not Chaldæa, though day by day we are becoming more astounded at the disinterred memorials of its science and religion, its social glory and its military power. Not Greece, though the spell of its art and letters, its beauty and poetry, its valour and enterprise survives all its material and moral decay. Not Rome, though first by her military prowess, and next by a spiritual spell, she made herself mistress of the world. Not Britain, where freedom has fought so many a battle, where industry and commerce have gained so many a triumph, whose sons have peopled continents, and on whose empire the sun never sets.

Proofs of this interest.

All are interesting countries, and have had a remarkable influence. But Palestine outshines them all. Its people have been unlike all other

races. From its bosom there sprung One with whose name no other name may be coupled. His influence has consecrated every spot which His feet ever touched, and covered the whole land with glory. In the Middle Ages, the flower of the chivalry of Europe poured out its blood to rescue it from dishonour. Princes of the blood royal, scholars and divines of the greatest fame, travellers and pilgrims from the very ends of the earth have eagerly sought its shores, and been thrilled by its scenes. Every hill on its surface has been surveyed and measured. The name of every town, village, brook, rock, has been keenly examined, and great has been the joy of identifying any of them with places mentioned in Hebrew history. The present desolation of the land does not repel the crowds of visitors. "Jerusalem the golden" of our imaginations, becomes to our senses "Jerusalem the desolate," but men and women rush to it all the same. Lepers, hideous through disease and mutilation; mangy dogs, scraping up dunghills; mud huts, dreary and comfortless; insects that throw one into a fever by day, and rob one of rest by night, are found in all directions; yet all fail to disenchant the country, or destroy its glory as "The Holy Land."

Not the fruit of superstition.

Sceptics may indeed say that all this is the fruit of superstition, and is no evidence that anything ever occurred on the soil of Palestine different in

kind from what has occurred in other lands. But is it not a strange superstition that has laid hold of such multitudes of the most enlightened of our race, not less than those inclined to superstition, and has kept its hold so firmly and so long? The events that are alleged to have made the country so famous were patent enough; nothing was done in a corner. The men who first enshrined Jesus of Nazareth in their hearts were plain, honest people, who had abundant opportunity of testing His claims; they had no doubt on the subject, and having faith themselves, they encouraged and persuaded others to believe. But according to the sceptic, they were all dupes or dreamers, and those who believed them were dupes or dreamers too. And on this foundation of sand the edifice of the Christian faith has been reared, and these fantastic ideas about Palestine have sprung up and prevailed. A more enlightened age will sweep them all away, and will bring Palestine to the level of Greece or Egypt, or any of the more common regions of the East. So the sceptic may flatter himself; but with little reason. The halo that encircles the land of Israel comes, we believe, from a higher source, and will last while the earth endures.

Palestine a witness for the Bible on ground of fact.

But in viewing Palestine as a witness to the Bible, we may take still firmer ground. We may leave the region of sentiment, and pass over to the region of fact. The Bible to a large extent is a

historical record. Substantially, it is the record of God's revelation of Himself to men, in the way of grace; but that revelation was made in connexion with the history of a particular people—the children of Israel. Now, the history of that people and the reality of God's revelation are very closely intertwined. If they really left Egypt by passing through the Red Sea, God must have supernaturally guided them. If they spent forty years in Sinai; if, straight from the desert, they overthrew and annihilated such powerful enemies as Sihon and Og; if Joshua crossed the Jordan, and swept before him the confederate kings of southern Canaan; if the collection of rival tribes grew under David into a great and well-knit empire, they must have been in a supernatural relation to God. Again, if the expectation of a coming descendant in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, took hold of Abraham, moulded and guided his life, and the lives of his sons, and became in future ages the load-star of the nation, the cynosure of all eyes, the climax of all hopes—that expectation must have had a supernatural origin. The reality of the Hebrew history and of God's supernatural revelation thus stand or fall together. Anything that throws light on the reality of the history, throws light at the same time on the reality of the supernatural manifestation. If the great historical results were as they are

Supernatural element in history of Israel.

Grounds of Abraham's faith supernatural.

stated to have been, there must have been a supernatural element in the history, for otherwise the results are unaccountable and impossible.

Now, it is as one, but not the only, means of establishing the reality of the facts that we appeal in this Tract to the witness of the land. There are various ways, as we shall try to show, in which the land and the history are connected. I. First of all, in the case of Abraham, the land has a wonderful influence, drawing him somehow from his native country, holding him as with a spell—a spell which he transmits to his son—a spell so powerful that centuries later it draws his descendants from Egypt to attempt a seemingly desperate enterprise, in order to secure what was promised to their great ancestor. II. Next, we may observe how the general configuration of the country agrees with the great purpose which had to be accomplished through its occupation by the Israelites, viz., their separation from the rest of the world in order that the worship of God might be maintained among them, free from the taint of neighbouring idolatries. III. In the history of the campaigns of Joshua, when the country was subdued and divided, we may trace a remarkable coincidence between the facts as they are recorded, and the actual physical condition of the country—a coincidence the more remarkable that it must have been unknown to the writers of the history,

Various connexions of the land and the history.

the science of physical geography by which it is brought to light being quite modern. IV. In many other facts of the history, occurring at subsequent times, both in the Old Testament and the New, a similar coincidence may be found between the history and the land. V. And finally, in the present condition of the land, we find its testimony to the truth of the *prophetic* record, which not only foretold that the Israelites would be driven from it, but also that it would be kept in a condition of semi-desolation, as if waiting for their return.

I.

The Land in its Relation to Abraham.

Abraham's history biblical.

Our sole information on Abraham's early history is from the Bible. The revelations of recent research respecting the wonderful Accadian race of whose kingdom Ur was one of the capitals,[1] have as yet given us nothing about Abraham. It is quite possible that important discoveries may yet be made. If Ur was the great place that is represented, and Accadian civilisation was so advanced as the late Mr. Smith and Professor Sayce have told us, Eastern scholars may yet come upon documents that will tell us more of the patriarch.

[1] Smith's *Babylonia.*

What the Bible narrative says of him is that at the age of seventy-five, in obedience to a command from the Lord, he left his native land. There is not the slightest reason to suppose with Ewald that he was one of a large emigration that went at that time from Chaldæa. There is no allusion to such a company, or to any fragments of it, either at the time, or afterwards, when Abraham sent Eliezer to Haran for a wife to Isaac, or when Jacob fled from Esau to his mother's family. To all appearance, Abraham's was a solitary case of emigration. It must have been prompted by a strong and peculiar motive. Chaldæa was a country of marvellous fertility, and there is no reason to suppose that the plain was over-peopled. The Oriental races generally are not eager for emigration or other daring enterprises—and the Shemites were less disposed to move than the descendants of Japhet. Abraham seems to have been a man of great importance, for the Hittites call him "a mighty prince."[1] We can find no motive for his movement except that given in Genesis, that it was the result of a Divine command. And the subsequent history of Abraham, especially his conduct in the surrender of Isaac, shows that he was a man of such loyalty to God as to be capable of surrendering everything, however dear to him, in deference to His will.

God's call the only reason for his emigration.

[1] Genesis xxiii. 6.

Threefold promise of God to Abraham.

The command from God to Abraham was accompanied with a threefold promise; that He would bring him to a land where he was to dwell; that He would make of him a great nation; and that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. We need not ask whether Abraham understood the full import of these promises. He certainly understood thus much—that God designed that he and his seed should dwell in the land that He was to show him; and that in that land He would make him the subject of extraordinary blessing, blessing that should not be limited to him, but should embrace also all the families of the earth. The land and the blessing were tied together by a link of God's own forming. The land was worth little without the blessing, and the blessing could not be had but in the land. This was the idea conveyed to Abraham, and his whole life shows how thoroughly he was influenced by it.

Relied on by Abraham.

Drawbacks to residence in Palestine.

The land was very unlike the flat fertile plain of Chaldæa. It was not level, but mountainous, full at the same time of beauty and fertility; but the choicest parts of it were doubtless in possession of the Canaanite, who "dwelt in the land." Abraham could have got little more than leave to pasture his flocks in the upland "wilderness;" in all the country, till the death of Sarah, he had not so much as a place to bury his dead. And the Canaanite was not an agreeable neighbour. Neither his religion

nor his morality was congenial to the patriarch. To wander about a kind of intruder, certainly a stranger and a pilgrim, in this rocky country, pitching his tent here or there as the way might open to him, amid gross idolatry and immorality, was anything but the ideal of a happy life. Yet how tenaciously Abraham clung to it! Famine drives him to Egypt, where, after discovering his true relation to Sarah, the king loads him with wealth and honour; but forthwith he returns to Canaan. A burial-place has to be provided for Sarah; but he does not dream of laying her remains in the sepulchre of her fathers, he purchases a field and a cave from the sons of Heth. A wife has to be found for Isaac, and Eliezer, his confidential servant, is sent on the mission to Padan-aram, the land of his fathers. The shrewd Eliezer foresees that even if he find one suitable, her family will be very unwilling to send her to Canaan, and may propose that Isaac should go to her, not she to Isaac; Abraham deprecates the thought, it is not to be entertained for a moment; if the damsel will not come to Canaan the matter must end. Jacob quarrels with Esau, and flies to Laban; he marries his daughters, and prospers in his employment, and everything seems to point to his settling in the country beside him; the anger of Esau is a real and very terrible source of alarm; but, in spite of all Jacob dares every risk and ventures back to

Abraham though a pilgrim clings to the land.

So does Jacob in spite of troubles.

Canaan, because, as his midnight conflict with the angel shows, his heart is set on securing the blessing which drew his grandfather thither. When Jacob hears of Joseph being ruler in Egypt, he will not consent to leave Canaan and go down to him till he has got Divine permission. On the death of Jacob, his body is carried by his sons to be buried at Machpelah, in the sepulchre of his fathers; and when Joseph is dying, he takes an oath of his brethren that when God visits them they will carry up his bones to Canaan.

And Joseph.

Origin. of this attachment.

Now, the question cannot but arise, Whence came this extraordinary affection for the land of Canaan, while all that they possessed in it was a grave? What drew Abraham to it from Mesopotamia, brought him back to it from Egypt, and would not let him hear of Isaac leaving it? What made its attractions so irresistible to Jacob? What made the great lord of Egypt decline the honours of pyramid and mausoleum, and bind his brethren so solemnly that he should be buried in the soil of Canaan? If we accept the plain and repeated statement of the Bible that all this was done in connexion with a Divine promise, which began with a gift, though not the actual possession, of the land, and which was to culminate in the coming of One in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, the problem is solved. On that theory, everything is plain and consistent. That key moves

smoothly among the wards, and opens the lock easily and at once. Nor can any other feasible explanation be devised. Apart from this supposition, the facts are a jumble of mysteries. Father, son, grandson, and great-grandson reverse all the principles by which sensible men are usually guided, and act like fools. They show a passionate and ridiculous love for a country in which they do not possess a single acre. They reject most tempting offers elsewhere, run ridiculous risks, repudiate most desirable settlements. What theory of the lives of Abraham and his family can stand for a moment that does not proceed on the ground that it was a Divine communication that first guided him to Canaan, and that it was their strong faith in God's supernatural promise that held them so firmly to the soil, and made them count it blessed beyond all other lands?

The only key to the problem.

II.

The Land in its Relation to God's Purpose respecting Israel.

The descendants of Abraham were chosen by God to be a peculiar people to Himself. They were to receive His revelations respecting the way of deliverance from sin, and the institutions He was to establish for His worship. The knowledge of God and of His will was to be preserved among

Israel was to be a peculiar people.

them free from the corruptions of the other religions of the world. The promise of One in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed was in due time to be fulfilled in connexion with their race and their country. What made it peculiarly needful to select a people for these purposes was the universal tendency of the nations to idolatry. Men would not retain the knowledge of God in their hearts, and would not confine themselves to the fitting rites of His worship. If the knowledge and worship of the true God were not to perish from the earth, special means must be used to preserve them. The best means that could be selected might not wholly effect the object; but it might lay a foundation on which, through the maintenance of suitable ordinances, aided by the watchful influence of Divine love, and the faithful discipline of chastisement, a measure of fidelity might be preserved, backslidings might be healed, and the light might continue to shine.

In order to preserve the knowledge of the one true God.

For effecting such purposes, a suitable territory had to be found. That territory must be in some degree separate from the rest of the world. It would not answer the purpose if it were in immediate contact with the great idolatrous nations; for besides that these nations would threaten their independence, the Israelites were only too ready to follow the example of idolaters. Nor would it be suitable if quite buried and cut off from access to

Fitness of the land for this purpose.

the rest of the world, for the time would come when the light that had been preserved in Israel must flash out for the benefit of the whole family of man. A land sufficiently secluded from other nations to preserve the purity of worship prescribed by God; yet sufficiently near to other countries to be a convenient centre of light when the time should come for Israel to "arise and shine,"—was the desideratum for accomplishing God's purpose respecting his people.

Isolation of Palestine.

Now, Palestine, as actually possessed by the seed of Abraham, was just such a land.[1] It is remarkably isolated from other countries, and yet it is not buried away at the ends of the earth, but lies in the very centre of the old world. On the south and east it was girdled by deserts; on the north, the parallel ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon left only the Valley of Cœlo-Syria, or hollow Syria, as a way of access; while along the west it was protected by the Mediterranean. On the south and east, the only people with whom the Israelites could have easy intercourse were the desert tribes that hung on their skirts—Amalek, Moab, Ammon, and Edom. The dispossessed Canaanites had taken refuge to a considerable

[1] We do not here take account of the limits of the country promised to Abraham, as the ultimate inheritance of his seed, but to the territory actually possessed, at least up to the time of David.

extent among the northern mountains, and to some degree their influence remained. The Philistines still held their strip of seaboard on the south, and the Phœnicians on the north. But in ordinary circumstances none of these tribes was capable by itself of making much impression on the Israelites. It was only in times of carelessness in Israel and tendency to idolatry that their power prevailed. The fact that the Israelites were often fascinated by the idolatry of these comparatively feeble neighbours, shows how dangerous the neighbourhood of any of the great idolatrous nations would have been. But in the land of Canaan they were as far removed from the seductive power of Chaldæa on the north, and Egypt on the south, as they could well have been. No situation, therefore, could have been better adapted for the maintenance of their national independence, and of the knowledge and worship of the true God.

Nature of the seacoast.

We have said that the sea was a barrier on the west. To most nations, however, the sea, instead of a wall of separation, is a highway of communication. But it was not so to the Israelites, and for an obvious reason—the seaboard of Canaan is remarkably even. It is pierced by no creeks, gulfs, or firths that would constitute good natural harbours. Joppa and Accho were the only sea-ports; but if the entrance to Joppa in those days was like the entrance now, when passengers have to be landed

in boats, and have to shut their eyes in the excitement of being borne over the black reef that obstructs the entrance, the harbour of Joppa could have had little to boast of. The evenness of the seaboard of Canaan is the more remarkable when contrasted with that of Phœnicia, a little to the north. Phœnicia was celebrated for its seaports. One has only to glance at the physical map of Palestine to see the cause. In Phœnicia, roots of the Lebanon mountains run into the sea, making a much more jagged sea line, and reducing to the smallest limit the proportion of the country adapted for tillage. The Phœnicians could not be an agricultural people; naturally they were sailors and merchants, and indeed their flag was known in every port of the world. But in Palestine, instead of the spurs of mountains running into the sea, we find along the coast a level plain, well adapted for tillage, but offering no scope whatever for seafaring pursuits. Unlike the Phœnicians, the Israelites never took kindly to the sea. As a symbol in Scripture, "it is the element of danger and strife; its proud waves are the emblems of the rebellious lifting up their voice; its endless surging denotes the eternal unrest of the wicked; and in the Apocalypse it is a feature of the new earth, that in it there is no more sea." No people can have their home on the deep, or be much on the sea, whose country, by its jagged seaboard, is not well

Contrast between Phœnicia and Land of Israel.

The Jews did not like the sea.

Contrast of Palestine to Greece or Britain.

provided with natural harbours. The peninsula of Greece is serrated round and round. Our own island has no lack of creeks and coves, as well as larger estuaries. Palestine had so few that her people could but stay at home and cultivate the soil. They were bound, as we say, to be an agricultural people, and were thus, physically, in the most favourable circumstances for preserving their religion pure from idolatrous contamination.

The history of Israel up to the time of David accords entirely with these conditions of their country. Their chief enemies then were the remnant of the Canaanites, and the small tribes that hung on their borders. It is true that portions of the people often adopted the religious customs of these tribes in preference to their own; but this compliance invariably brought them into trouble, and there always remained under the Divine dealings a rallying power in the better part of the nation to throw off the yoke and repudiate the idolatry of their neighbours. In the later period of their history, however, this state of things was materially changed.

The first enemies were the neighbouring tribes.

Afterwards Egypt and Chaldæo-Assyria.

We have said that, secluded in a sense though Palestine was, it lay in the very heart of the old world. In particular, it formed the link of connexion between the two great empires that contended for mastery in the ancient world — the Egyptian on the south, and the Chaldæo-Assyrian

on the north. In the early history of the Hebrews, little is heard of these two powers. But in the progress of the history, their conflicts with each other become more frequent and more prominent, and we find them often in contact with the land of Israel, and usually in collision with her rulers. Under David, Israel had become a great power, and could not be overlooked by either Egypt on the south, or Assyria or Chaldæa on the north. If Israel had faithfully learned her lesson during the earlier and quieter period of her history, she might now have been ready for her higher and wider function as "a light to lighten the Gentiles." But she was not ready for this function. Calamity and dispersion had to take place ere she could fulfil this purpose of her calling. Still, even at this period, the religion of Israel may have exercised a missionary influence in the case of some members of these distant nations. We find Isaiah speaking of "sons of the stranger" that had "joined themselves to the Lord," and of eunuchs that kept God's Sabbaths and laid hold of His covenant, and to them is given the promise of a name and place in God's house and within His walls, better than of sons and of daughters. The prophecy that God's house would be a house of prayer for all nations belongs to the same period. Ebedmelech, who befriended Jeremiah, and whose hearty and courageous service in his behalf seems

The missionary influence of Israel's religion.

God's house to be a house of prayer for all nations.

to have sprung from spiritual sympathy, was an Ethiopian. Such facts were like the faint streaks of dawn foreshowing what would afterwards be so plain—the great advantage for missionary purposes of the situation of the land of Israel.

The full benefit of the situation seen after the captivity

But the full benefit of that situation remained to be seen afterwards. When the captivity at Babylon came to an end, and leave was given to return to Jerusalem, besides those who returned to settle, there were many who went up periodically from other countries to be present at the feasts. Their visits to the ancient capital served to keep their religion living and fresh, and to prevent it from becoming mixed up with the pagan religions around them. But the Hebrew religion more than held its own—it gained many proselytes. And then when in the fulness of the times Christ appeared, no spot on the earth could have been better adapted than Jerusalem to be the great propagandist centre of Christianity. Jews, who had come from all directions to the feast, returned home to propagate the good news of the kingdom. There were highways, as it were, from Jerusalem to all parts of the civilized world. From no other place could the command have been more suitably given, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Suitability of Jerusalem to be the propagandist centre of Christianity.

Thus admirably was the land adapted to all the purposes for which it was chosen. By its seclusion,

in one sense, it served first of all as a sort of preserve, where the true religion might be nursed and protected from the idolatries of the great pagan powers. Lying between the two great rival empires, it afterwards drew to it the leading nations, and furnished them with their first lessons in the saving knowledge of God. Finally, having become the scene of the birth and the death of Jesus, it became the centre from which the glad tidings of redemption issued, and from which, through the dispersion of the Hebrew race, they were carried over all the world.

The land fulfilled God's purposes.

Thus we see that the Hebrew history as recorded in the Old Testament books has all the marks of a real history. It is in no sense mythical, or allegorical, or imaginative; it is "downright" history. All the evidence from the ancient monuments of Egypt and Assyria is to the same effect; to this we add the evidence of the land. Its position, its boundaries, its relation to other and more distant countries all evince that the narrative in the Hebrew Scriptures is a record of real events.

III.

The Land in its Relation to the Work of Joshua.

The first few verses of Joshua furnish a remarkable proof of courage, enterprise, and devotion to the will of the Lord. The lands of Sihon and Og

Why the people did not settle east of Jordan.

on the east of the Jordan, which had just been conquered, were most attractive and desirable. They were remarkably well fitted for cattle—the only kind of property which the Israelites had. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, having much cattle, asked and obtained leave to settle on that side of the Jordan. But it is evident that this arrangement was regarded as a questionable one, and that that side of the Jordan was counted very inferior to the other. It was not that Bashan and Gilead were less fertile, or less suitable for an agricultural people. Yet, somehow, the west of the Jordan was *the* land. It was on its soil that Moses had such a desire to stand. It was the *coup d'œil* of the land from Dan to Beersheba obtained from the top of Pisgah, that formed his consolation under the chastisement that hindered him from crossing the river. Whence this extraordinary devotion to the western part of the country, now held as it was by so powerful enemies? We are thrown back on the considerations that had such a fascination for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. This was emphatically the land of promise. It was in connexion with this that the blessing was to be given. The command was accordingly given to Joshua to pass over Jordan, and take possession. And the faith and courage of Joshua and the people were shown in their unflinching obedience to the difficult command.

The western part the land of promise.

The campaign of Joshua was a definite and comprehensive one; and both in its leading features and in its details, it showed a remarkable adaptation to the structure of the country. The structure of Western Palestine may be compared roughly to the backbone of a fish, having an elevated plateau in the middle running from north to south, from which a series of ridges, like the sidebones of the fish, stretch out on both sides, running towards the Maritime plain on the west, and the Jordan on the east.[1] Any one may see that it would be extremely difficult to conquer such a country from the south. Each successive ridge, corresponding to the lateral bones of the fish, would have presented a new obstacle to the invading host. If Joshua had been represented as invading the country along the line of Beersheba, Hebron, Bethlehem, etc., the enterprise would have been most difficult, in the light of the modern science of physical geography. The only feasible military approach from the south would have been effected by seizing the Philistine plain, and advancing by it to the plain of Esdraelon, which stretches across the country from the sea to the Jordan. But we are told expressly that "the Lord led them not through the way of the land

Campaign of Joshua.

His line of invasion.

[1] That most valuable of all contributions to our knowledge of the physical condition of Palestine, the Trigonometrical Map of the Palestine Exploration Fund, has been carefully studied in connexion with this tract. It throws most valuable light on the relation of the land to the history.

of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." (Exodus xiii. 17.) This route having been avoided, Joshua proceeded to invade the country on its eastern flank. Having entered it there, it was next necessary for Joshua to plant himself firmly on some commanding point of the central plateau, thereby, in the first place, cutting the land in two, and securing a base from which he might gradually extend his conquests both southwards and northwards.

The supernatural in the Bible.

We must observe that it is not the way of the Bible to introduce the supernatural without due cause. As much work as possible is seen to be done by natural causes, and the supernatural begins where the natural ends. In the campaigns of Joshua we have just three miracles. Two were at the outset of his career, and one further on. The first was the supernatural drying up of the Jordan to allow the host to cross. The river was in flood, and Joshua had no resources for crossing by natural means. The second was the supernatural fall of the walls of Jericho. The destruction of that stronghold was indispensable, otherwise the host would have been exposed to incessant attack. These two miracles accomplished, the campaign advances by natural causes.

First, Joshua selects a ravine by which to reach a commanding position on the plateau. The ravine

selected is that on which the city of Ai stood; and after a repulse, occasioned by the disobedience of Achan, the city and the neighbouring territory fell into his hands. There is something like a gap here in the narrative. After the destruction of Ai, we find Joshua at Mount Ebal, near the ancient Shechem, fulfilling an order which God had given about the reading of the law. But Ebal is some twenty-five miles north of Ai. How did Joshua get there? Either he must have fought his way; or the chiefs, seized with panic, must have given up the country to him. In either case, it was an important step. It indicated that Joshua had got possession of the central part of the plateau, virtually commanding the central portion of Palestine—that which afterwards constituted the territory of the important tribe of Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh. Another section of the plateau came into his possession through the treachery of the Gibeonites, who pretended to come from a great distance, but were really near neighbours of Ai.

How Joshua reaches the central plateau.

At first the confederate kings in the south had been stricken with panic; but hearing of the capture of Ai, and the cession of the Gibeonite territories and cities, and knowing that Joshua now held an important section of the plateau in the very heart of the country, they pluck up courage and prepare to attack him. Five kings on the south, occupying the territory that afterwards formed the

Confederacy of native kings defeated.

kingdom of Judah, bring up their forces to Gibeon. Joshua, executing a swift night march from Jericho, falls on them unexpectedly, and completely defeats them. Not satisfied with routing them, he pursues them down the *western* slope of the plateau, the well-known pass of Bethhoron. The work was too great to be done in an ordinary day, and to enable him to finish it, his third miracle was wrought, the sun stood still. If Joshua had done no more than obtain possession of the pass of Bethhoron on the west, as he had already secured that of Ai on the east, he would have achieved a great military feat, for he would have completely cut off communication between the south and the north. But he did more. He followed up his victory by besieging the principal cities until he got possession of them all. The Anakims—the dread of the generation that came out of Egypt—shared the common destruction. The infatuation of the kings in assembling to fight with Joshua at Gibeon, proved the ruin of their country. Being utterly defeated in battle, their people could put no further obstacle in Joshua's way, except their fenced cities; one by one these were taken, and over the whole southern part of the kingdom, Joshua was left without opposition.

Completeness of Joshua's victory.

There is a Samaritan tradition [1] that it was now that Joshua undertook the reduction of the central part of the country. We have seen, however, that

[1] Conder's *Guide to the Holy Land*, p. 255.

he must have made great progress in this before his expedition against the kings of the south. From the Bible we learn that some of the chiefs retreated northwards (see Josh. xi. 2, 3), and took part in the very determined stand which was made next at the waters of Merom, by the confederate potentates of the north.

Another native confederation defeated at Merom.

It was for the district afterwards known as Galilee, or Upper Galilee, that this stand was made. Jabin, "king of Hazor," headed the movement, inviting his own immediate neighbours and a number of other chiefs who were more remote. But they shared the fate of the southern warriors; they were utterly defeated, and the whole of Northern Palestine came into the possession of Israel.

Separation of east and west by Jordan valley.

It is a noticeable fact that the conquest of the part east of the Jordan, as effected by Moses, was quite a separate achievement, and had no direct effect whatever on the conquest of the west. It is very rare that a river makes such an important separation between countries. But the Jordan though narrow was no ordinary river, or rather the valley through which it flowed was no ordinary valley. Near the sources of the river, the valley begins to be depressed below the level of the sea, and the depression increases as the river advances, reaching its maximum at the entrance to the Dead Sea, where the depression is 1,300 feet. This, coupled with the fact that on each side of

the Jordan valley there rose an elevated plateau not less than 2,000 feet above the sea level, made the Jordan far more than an ordinary boundary. Its deep depression, with the steep passes on either side, made it an almost impassable barrier. Hence the conquest of the east side contributed nothing to the conquest of the west. We observe, too, in Joshua's campaigns how thoroughly the threefold division of the country into south, middle, and north was recognised. It was the same physical conditions that gave rise to the threefold division of after times — into Judah, Samaria, Galilee. Each section of the country is separated by natural barriers from the rest. The passes of Ai and Bethhoron, and other passes, form a natural separation between Judah and Samaria. North of Samaria, the wild, hilly region of Galilee has peculiar features of its own. But the physical separation of Samaria and Galilee is not so marked as that between Samaria and Judah. In the later history of the country, Samaria and Galilee were united in the kingdom of Jeroboam; but Judah was quite apart, and then, as later, it might almost have been said that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. In all this we see how thoroughly the physical structure of the country corresponds with the history, and we find a strong reason for believing that the history is a simple and faithful record of real events.

Subsequent threefold division.

IV.

The Land in its Relation to the Subsequent History.

Effects of the separation caused by the Jordan valley.

One of the earliest incidents after the settlement indicates clearly the unusual nature of the separation which the Jordan Valley effected between the east and the west. Hardly had the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh returned from helping in the conquest of the west, when they built a great altar on the banks of the river, and on being challenged for the unauthorised proceeding, gave as an explanation that the Jordan was so profound a barrier between the two sides of the country, that apart from some such monument, to be a witness of the oneness of the people, it would be thought that the dwellers on the east had "no part in the Lord." It was a good stroke of policy when David was flying from Absalom, that he contrived to get to the other side of the river, and thus throw the deep valley between him and his pursuers. Fain would Zedekiah have taken the same course when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar; but though he got as far as the plains of Jordan, he was unable to effect his object; taken by the enemy, he was carried to Riblah, where his sons were slain and his eyes put out. Our Lord's habit, when worn out with labour and the crowds

that came to Him, of escaping for a time "to the other side," showed that there He found a silence and seclusion not to be had on the west. In the region of Perea He seems to have been less in danger than in Judea, and less exposed to those cavils and snares on the part of His enemies which He was always so ready to meet, but which must have caused to His mind an excessive strain not easy to bear.

The east not so safe as the west.

On the other hand, the wisdom of the Divine plan, which had made the west of Jordan the Land of Promise in an especial sense, became evident as events emerged. From the beginning, the eastern tribes were more exposed to the forays of the Midianites, Amalekites, and other inhabitants of the eastern deserts; and from their isolated position they were less able to repel them, as they could not always reckon on the aid of their brethren. But a far more serious danger threatened them when the northern powers, Syria and Assyria, began to wish for the possession of Palestine. Lying nearest to them, the eastern settlements were naturally the objects of their first attacks. It was the king of Assyria that was by far the most formidable assailant. Four kings of Assyria, Shalmanezer II., Pul, Tiglath-Pileser II., and Shalmanezer IV., attacked the kingdom in succession. In these invasions, first the frontier towns were taken, and their inhabitants carried into

Attacked by kings of Assyria.

captivity; then the rest of the people, and at the end the whole of the ten tribes. In their national history the tribes that had been more attracted by the rich pastures of Gilead and Bashan than by the spiritual promise associated with the west, paid dear for their preference; their country was desolated, and their land devoured by strangers many years before the same calamities reached their brethren on the other side of the river.

Situation of the tribes.

The allotments to the various tribes, and the positions in which they were severally fixed, is an interesting subject, on which some careful students of Scripture believe that a good deal may be said. Undoubtedly, the position of the leading tribe, the tribe of Judah, was remarkable both in itself and in its bearing on the national history. The territory of Judah, in which we may include that of Benjamin, Simeon, and Dan, was in no wise conspicuous for beauty, nor for many of the other qualities that at first sight constitute a desirable possession. For the most part it is a rocky, mountainous tract, where the bare limestone hills throw up everywhere those grey crags and blocks which, though an evidence of a rich soil, and favourable under a great amount of labour to the growth of the vine, give to the country, neglected as it is now, its peculiar aspect of desolation. Abounding in caverns, it afforded shelter to many a wild animal —such as the lion and the bear. Between Jeru-

Judah.

Home of wild animals.

salem and Jericho robbers haunted its passes. Within its precincts lay the region in which our Lord was tempted, and where it was said He was with the wild beasts. To compensate for these disadvantages, it was the home and head-quarters of the vine. The limestone soil and the terraced hills are well adapted for that plant, and it is not difficult to understand how such a sample as the twelve spies carried back from Hebron might be found on some of its sunny slopes. The vineyard of Engedi is celebrated in the Song of Solomon; and even yet, a cool fountain and a tropical climate show what rare products may have been obtained in such a spot.

Region of the vine.

Well protected.

But the tribe of Judah had a far more important advantage in those disturbed and warlike times. It was by far the best protected part of the land. The passes of Benjamin on the north, the Dead Sea on the east, and to some extent the desert on the south and south-east folded it in their snug embrace. Its chief danger was on the west, where it lay open to the Philistines, and from them in its early history its troubles chiefly came. But it had another source of protection. By far the strongest natural fortress in the country lay within this territory. Surrounded by mountains, and standing itself on considerable heights, Jerusalem seemed the very spot on which to place the chief city of the country. If it was "beautiful for situation,"

Situation of Jerusalem.

it was so in a military or utilitarian, rather than an æsthetic or picturesque sense. It was the very symbol of a God-encircled, God-protected city. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever." To an invading army it was difficult of access. And even when an army was under the walls, its strength and security may be judged of from the saying ascribed to the Roman general Titus—that if it had not been for the dissensions among the people themselves, the place could never have been taken.

Captain Conder's description

Captain Conder, R.E., of the Palestine Exploration Society, gives a striking account of the position of Jerusalem, in relation to the history of the country.

"In the conformation of the Jewish hills, the secret of the immense vitality of the Jewish nationality is probably to be found. Had the capital of Judea been placed at Cæsarea, on the high-road from Greece to Egypt—had it even been permanently fixed at Shechem, accessible through the open valley of Samaria, it cannot be doubted that Greek or Egyptian influence would have affected far more the manners and religion of the Jews. Remote and inaccessible in its rugged mountains, Jerusalem was removed from the highway by which the hosts of the Pharaohs advanced on Assyria. It was only accessible by one of three difficult passes, unless the whole country of Samaria were in the hands of the enemy. Hence, in the mountains of Judea, the national faith had a secure home. The Philistines overran the plains, and even came up into the Shephelah; Egyptian and Assyrian monarchs conquered Samaria and Galilee; but a small band of undisciplined peasants was able, under the Maccabees, to hold at bay the armies of the Seleucidæ, and it required the fullest efforts of Roman energy and discipline to compass the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus or under Hadrian. The

history again repeats itself in Crusading times. The Judæan hills resisted long after all other parts of the country had been lost, and Saladin held Jerusalem undisturbed while Richard overran the plains."[1]

Coincidences manifestly undesigned are strong proofs of the truth of a history. If we pass to New Testament times, we shall find some interesting instances of such coincidence in the life of our Lord. All know that His discourses abounded in illustrations, and that the illustrations which He employed were of a very varied character. But the variety, however casual it may seem to us, was in reality far from casual. It is interesting to observe that most of His parables derived from vineyards were spoken in or near Jerusalem, in that district of the country which, we have seen, was the head-quarters of the vine.[2] Galilee was not much of a vine-growing district, but it had its famous lake abounding in fish; it had its cornfields covering the little plain at the north-west angle, which was such a marvel of fertility; it had its tares and its wheat, its mustard plant and its lilies springing into beauty when the right season was come. Hence it is with Galilee that we are led to connect the parables of the sower, the drag-net, and the mustard, and the use of the lily to enforce the duty of trusting in God. After visiting

Our Lord's illustrations not casual.

The vine district.

Features of Galilee.

[1] *Tent Work in Palestine*, i. 17, 18.

[2] Matt. xx. 1, xxi. 33; Luke xiii. 6; John xv. 1.

Palestine, Renan found it to reflect so thoroughly the life and lessons of Jesus, that to him it appeared like a fifth Gospel. To the close student, one part of it will appear to reflect the Gospel according to St. Matthew, another part the Gospel according to St. John. The teaching of Jesus in Galilee and in Judea respectively has a flavour of the soil. This feature is one of the numberless traces of reality that mark the life of Christ as delineated in the four Gospels, and that justify the remark that it were far more wonderful that that life should have been a myth, than that it should have been a reality.

Climate of Jerusalem.

The adaptation of the situation and climate of Jerusalem to the events connected with it might receive much ampler illustration. One instance we cannot but give. From a recent paper by the Secretary of the Scottish Meteorological Society, we learn that for the last eighteen years Jerusalem has been, in a sense, a station of that Society, so that the variations of its climate at different seasons of the year are now matters of scientific certainty. It is a peculiarity of the climate of Jerusalem, that about the beginning of April the thermometer often falls very low, much below the average of the season. There is often a return of winter, as it were, in April. In October, which in most places has a temperature like that of April, the thermometer at Jerusalem is steady, it is not subject

to rapid falls as in April. Compare this with the fact that the Passover occurred in the beginning of April, and the Feast of Tabernacles in October. Now, the Passover was a domestic feast, kept within doors; the Feast of Tabernacles was kept in the open air. But owing to the great cold which so often prevailed in April, it would have been most inconvenient had the season of these two feasts been October and April respectively. It will be remembered that at the trial of Jesus, Peter stood by a fire to warm himself *because it was cold.* The severe cold, so often occurring in April, must have been prevailing at the time. There is evidence that the climate of Palestine has not materially changed during the historical period; for various species of plants still occur in Palestine that are known to have occurred in past ages. If the climate had become much colder it would have killed some of these species; if it had become much warmer it would have killed others. The reference in the Gospels to the great cold at the Passover is one of those touches of nature that mark a real history.

Cold in April.

Reference has been made to the prevalence of limestone in the geological structure of Palestine. With the exception of some volcanic rocks near the Lake of Galilee, limestone is the sole formation in the country. Blocks of rock, ravines, and caves are found everywhere, being the character-

The geological structure of Palestine.

istic features of a limestone district. The whole history of the country accords with this fact. Caves, for example, adapted for habitations both for the dead and the living, must have been very common in the country of Hebrew history. Abraham buries Sarah in the cave of Machpelah. The five kings that came against Joshua, being defeated and driven down Bethhoron, hide in a cave. In the days of Saul, when the Philistines had become very formidable, the men of Israel "hid themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits." David and his troop find accommodation in the cave of Adullam. Saul is asleep in a cave when David cuts off his skirts. In the days of Ahab and Jezebel, Obadiah hides the prophets by fifty in a cave. Isaiah, describing the day of the Lord, makes the people go into the caves for fear of the Lord. The grave where the body of Jesus was laid was a cave. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is said of the martyrs, "they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." We all know how inappropriate such language would be to a country like our own. Still more out of the question would it have been in any history having the scene laid in the valley of the Nile, or in the valley of the Euphrates or the Tigris. Even the peninsula of Sinai, region of rocks though it was, could not have suited such a

Prevalence of caves.

Only in a limestone country could Hebrew history have occurred.

record, for great granite masses, like the rocks of Sinai, are seldom hollowed into caves. Only in a limestone country like Palestine could the Hebrew history have occurred.

Testimony of Egyptian records.

The witness which the structure of the country thus bears to the historical reality of the Bible history is in thorough agreement with that which the monuments of Egypt and Assyria have been found to furnish. No serious historical discrepancy has been pointed out between the contents of these monumental records and the facts of Bible history. On the other hand, the testimony, at a hundred points, to the accuracy of Scripture is very remarkable. One of the most interesting of these testimonies is that borne by the Egyptian records to the condition of Palestine as parcelled out among a large number of independent chiefs or kings at a very early time. In the temple of Karnak an interesting record has lately been found of the military campaigns of Thotmes III., some 1600 years before Christ. One of these campaigns was directed against the country called "Ruthen"—corresponding to Canaan. The record relates that the hostile king of Kadesh arrived in the town of Maketha (Megiddo), where he had assembled the kings of all the countries from near the waters of Egypt to the land of Naharain. It thus appears that it was no new thing for one of the chiefs to unite his neighbours in opposition to a common

enemy, as was afterwards done in the case of Joshua. We are furnished likewise with a catalogue of the chieftains that were captured in Megiddo, from which it appears that many places had the same names then with which we become familiar in Old Testament history. The list includes Kadeshu (Kadesh), Maketha (Megiddo), Libina (Libna), Abil (Abila or Abel), Luis (Laish), Hazor, Kinnaroot (Chinnereth), Athamem (Adam), Shenana (Shunem), Ta'anak, Aper (Ophra), Jopoo (Joppa), Makthel (Migdol), Nanon (Nain), Beth-shean (Beth-shan), and many more.[1] Another fact which we gather from these records is, that the conquest of Canaan under Joshua must have been a very difficult and serious undertaking. Though the separate chiefs may have been but feeble, they were accustomed to act in concert, and their combinations, such as Joshua encountered, were very formidable. The Khita, or Hittite race, which prevailed in Western Syria, was indeed a very formidable one, able on some occasions, as the records show, to give no little trouble to the power of Egypt.

Names of cities the same.

Let us now try to ascertain the precise value of these facts, as witnesses to the Bible record. What they directly establish is the accuracy and literality of the narrative in all those points where the coincidence holds. We find no traces of the looseness

Value of the facts.

[1] See Brugsch's *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, vol. i., p. 35, etc.

and vagueness of a mythical or imaginative record. We have none of the features sure to occur in a history where the historian, having only certain vague traditions of remote and uncertain origin as his materials, frames the details from his own imagination. The history is not a poem or an allegory, but a matter-of-fact record, where the historian obviously restrains himself from colouring the narrative, and even from expressing his own feelings regarding it. So far as we have materials for testing it, the narrative is very exact. Time, place, and circumstance are all carefully noted. And the more the narrative is tested by the structure of the country, the more literally accurate is it found to be.

The history not mythical.

Now, the common representation of rationalists and sceptics regarding Bible history is, that all its supernatural statements are myths, and that their origin is due to that vague feeling of wonder and mystery in which men are prone to indulge regarding events shrouded in the mists of antiquity. They maintain that the writers indulged in very loose modes of viewing and recording events. They must have come under a spell which confounded in their brain facts and fancies, and made them record them together in strange confusion. This representation we distinctly challenge on the ground of fact. We maintain that the historical books of Scripture were not written, and could

The writers not dreamers.

not have been written in such a manner. Not only is the style of the historians plain, explicit, and exact, but, tested by every method in our possession, their statements are literally true. Is it reasonable to suppose that at one and the same time they were lucid and muddled,—that with one eye they saw naked facts, and with the other fictions and fancies,—that with one hand they recorded events as they happened, and with the other the dreams of an excited brain? Was their picture in the main a rigid photograph, but filled up in detail with conceptions as wild as were ever borrowed from fairy-land? Is there any other instance in all literature of records which for their literal truth stand all the positive tests to which modern research can subject them, and yet swarm with myths and fancies as unsubstantial as the baseless fabric of a vision?

The history inexplicable without the supernatural.

We maintain further, that facts now fully ascertained to be such by indisputable tests, DEMAND THE SUPERNATURAL FOR THEIR EXPLANATION. It cannot be disputed that the Israelites, after having been enslaved in Egypt, left that country, crossed the sea, lived long in the peninsula of Sinai, and suddenly acquiring a wonderfully warlike character, scattered the powerful armies of the confederate princes that opposed their entrance into Canaan. It cannot be disputed that they set up a remarkable civil and religious polity, with rites (such as the

passover) of a unique character, and that their whole institutions, civil and sacred, sprang out of their history as it is recorded by Moses and Joshua. Can these facts be accounted for without the supernatural? Does history furnish any analogous case, in which a body of slaves, having escaped by their unaided efforts from the land of the strongest government and most indomitable power in the world, overcame at the other end the opposition of a powerful confederacy who were in possession of the new country, and set up a polity, civil and religious, which lasted fifteen hundred years, resting on supernatural facts in which all of them believed most profoundly, but which in reality had no more foundation than a maniac's dreams? Is it not true that of all things incredulity is the most credulous, and rationalism the most irrational?

V.

The Land in its Relation to the Word of Prophecy.

Very old prophecies.

The land to which Abraham emigrated from Chaldæa, to which his posterity went up after centuries spent in Egypt, to which a portion of them returned after seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and which gave birth to the Founder of that religion which has prevailed so long throughout the civilised world, was the subject of many pre-

dictions in the writings of the Hebrew prophets. Two of the oldest books of the Bible (Leviticus and Deuteronomy) thus foretel what would be the condition of the land, in the event of the people proving faithless: "I will make your cities waste. . . . Your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land" (Levit. xxvi. 31, 43). "The generation to come of your children that shall rise after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land shall say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it—'Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto the land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?'" (Deut. xxix. 27). The predictions respecting the land run parallel to predictions respecting the people, who though scattered among the nations were yet to be preserved. In the latter days a great change was to come over the people; and then (as the Church has most generally believed), the land which seemed to have been awaiting them, was to be restored to their possession, and was to manifest far more than its former tokens of prosperity and blessing (Ezek. xxxvi. 1–15, Isa. xxxii. 13–15, Isa. vi. 11–13).[1]

Leviticus.

Deuteronomy.

Ezekiel and Isaiah.

[1] A word here respecting the objection of sceptics to the physical state of *countries* as an evidence of the fulfilment of prophecy. If God had occasion to rebuke a people, it is said, the rebuke would fall on the people, not their land. To scourge

Witness of travellers.

To the comparatively desolate condition of the country now, and indeed for generations back, all modern travellers bear convincing evidence. The enormous masses of ruins that are found in the country—a very weariness to the traveller's eye—are evidence sufficient of this fact. "Above all lands," says Dean Stanley, "Palestine is a land of ruins."[1] The country is miserably cultivated and miserably governed. The ruined terraces on the heights where the vine flourished indicate the falling-off from former times. In official reports it has been stated that the inhabitants of Syria are not one-tenth what the country is capable of supporting.[2] It might be different if the tillers of the

Condition of Palestine.

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the land for the sins of the people were like the act of a child, who beats the table against which it has accidentally knocked its head. The truth is, that the desolation of the land is only designed as a *visible remembrancer* of God's displeasure with the people. And in this point of view the *continuance* of the desolation for many ages is very remarkable. The dispossession of races had been common in Palestine. The first chapter of Deuteronomy gives many instances of it. But as new races always came in room of the previous occupants, the moral lessons to be derived from their calamities were soon forgotten. Not so in the case of the Jews and their land. The continued desolation of the land keeps in perpetual remembrance the sin of the people. Provision is thus made for the final accomplishment of the great purpose of God's dealing, and the effect will be all the more striking when at last mercy triumphs over judgment.

[1] *Sinai and Palestine.*

[2] Report on Statistics of Syria, presented to British Parliament, 1839, quoted in Keith's *Evidence of Prophecy*, 37th edition, p. 230.

ground were sure to reap where they have sown; but even when there are no Bedouins to plunder them, the Turkish tax-gatherer is an unfailing scourge. Since the Jews were dispossessed, no body of inhabitants have taken to the country as their own. During all these centuries no new race has arisen to associate its own traditions and songs and glories with the soil of Palestine. In England, Saxon and Dane and Norman have settled in the old homes of the Angle; but a new history speedily sprang up, and not by arms only, but by literature and art and religion and civilization generally, the strangers became blended with the country. No such process has ever taken place in Palestine; a mere *locum-tenens* race has been scattered over its soil. Men speculate on the feasibility of colonizing it with the descendants of its ancient people; to such an enterprise there are many difficulties; but the difficulty of getting quit of the present occupants hardly ever presents itself as an element in the case.

Not the country of any other people.

Is the present condition of the land an accident? This is what the sceptic now would probably say. No one now would think of taking up the foolish assertion of Voltaire, that it was always a miserable country, and that it never could have had either the riches or the population ascribed to it in Scripture. The unscrupulous rashness and ignorance of Voltaire glare on us in this statement. Tacitus,

Rash ground of Voltaire.

Josephus, Jerome, and hundreds of other authorities are directly against him. The multitude of ruined towns to which every traveller bears witness, and which the Palestine Exploration Expedition has now marked and tabulated with such exactness, proves that at one time the land swarmed with inhabitants. What we have said of its condition, past and present, is beyond reasonable contradiction.

Natural sagacity not enough to explain prophecy.

But, it is sometimes said, it is easy to foretel the downfall of famous countries. Lord Macaulay's picture of the New Zealander, sitting on the ruins of London Bridge, and surveying the desolation around him, may be coupled with the pictures of the desolation of the land of Israel that we find in the Hebrew prophets. Nations are not immortal. They have their periods of growth and decay. The poet may well ask,

"Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, where are they?"

Was there, then, anything wonderful in the prediction that Palestine would become a desolate land? Was not the same thing foretold of Babylon, Tyre, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Egypt, Ethiopia —in short every land conspicuous in Bible history? To writers who witnessed so many revolutions in the affairs of states as the Hebrew prophets, it was the most natural thing in the world to expect that the land of Israel would share the common fate,

would one day become conspicuous to all eyes in its contrast to its former glory.

This way of disposing of the supernatural element of prophecy is hardly less open to contradiction than the hasty assertion of Voltaire. The Hebrew predictions regarding the land of Israel are as far removed as possible from a general forecast that it would share the fate of other countries. It is quite an error that all the countries are classed together. There is a very remarkable discrimination in the predictions regarding them. To see this let us compare the predictions regarding Babylon, Egypt, and Palestine.

Prophecies concerning Babylon.

In regard to Babylon, nothing can be stronger than the predictions of unmitigated desolation from generation to generation (Isa. xiii. 17–22, etc.; Jeremiah xxv. 12–14; l. 12, 13, etc.; li.). And nothing can be more remarkable than their fulfilment. For let us observe that though it was quite common in those times for one people to dispossess another, it was hardly ever known that the dispossessed country should lie waste and desolate. Especially would this have been strange in the case of a city situated like Babylon. Nothing could exceed the fertility of the surrounding plain. Babylon had access to the sea by the Euphrates—a highway through the plain. When Alexander the Great conquered Babylon, he was so struck with the advantages of the site that he formed the

project of turning it into the capital of his magnificent empire.[1] Yet for century on century it has been desolate, and the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been fulfilled to the letter.

Prophecies on Egypt.

If we examine the prophecies on Egypt, we shall find that they too are peculiar. Desolate and withered it was to be, but not with a desolation like that of Babylon. It was to continue a kingdom, but it was to be the basest of the kingdoms (Ezek. xxix. 15). There was to be no more a prince of the land of Egypt; the sceptre was to depart away (Ezek. xxx. 13). The country which even in the days of Manetho was believed to have had a succession of thirty dynasties of kings, was to have the succession broken. Evidently the prophecy denotes that Egypt would be stripped of her ancient power and glory, that she would fall upon times very different from those when she claimed to be, and often was, mistress of the world. Has all this not come to pass? Egypt has never ceased to be a country. But she has never been the country that she used to be. She has never had a race of sovereigns to build pyramids and tombs, and temples like those of Karnak, nor a race of priests to astonish the world by their wisdom, nor of artificers to delight it with their arts and manufactures. For the most part she has owned subjection to a foreign power. Her efforts

[1] See Thirlwall's *History of Greece*, vol. vi. p. 227.

after independence have been unsuccessful. And yet Egypt is still an entity, a political unit in the affairs of the East and of the world. Here, too, the predictions of the Hebrew prophets have found a remarkable verification.

Prophecies on Palestine.

Lastly, let us take the case of Palestine. We have seen that the foretold desolation of the land of Israel was only partial. The most remarkable feature of the prophecies on this subject is that this limited desolation was to continue while the Jews continued to be scattered among the nations. Both these classes of predictions were in themselves unlikely. The preservation of the Jews as a separate race among all the nations where they have been scattered, is a unique fact in history. The chaplain of Frederick the Great had good reason for his answer, when he was asked by his master to give in one word a reason for believing in the inspiration of Scripture,—"The Jews, your Majesty." It was also unlikely that so productive and populous a country as Palestine should continue for years to support but one-tenth of its possible population. But it was by many times more unlikely that these two unlikely facts should run parallel to each other—that the race should be preserved for the land, and that the land should be preserved for the race. How often has the attempt been made to get possession of the land! The Romans tried, and in a sense succeeded, but

Attempts to possess the land.

Roman Palestine was never a flourishing country. Then came the Mohammedan conquest; and then the enterprise of the Crusades, with the nominally Christian kingdom, which, after a precarious occupation, at length expired. Under the Ottoman rule, its condition has not improved.

From time to time we hear of projects for restoring the country to its former owners. We know there are Hebrews of great wealth and great patriotism, and it is sometimes surmised that they are about to buy up the country. Mr. Lawrence Oliphant tries to persuade us that there is an excellent opening for a colony east of the Jordan.

Persecutions of the Jews.

The persecutions that have lately befallen the Jews have led to many of them being driven from the countries of their oppression, and it seems only natural that they should return to the land of their fathers. The cry of "Palestine for the Jews," "The land of Israel for the people of Israel" seems as natural and as just as the like cry for any other nationality.

The situation remarkable.

It must be owned on all sides that the situation is very remarkable. We know there are many obstacles to the return of the Jews to Palestine. Their habits now are not agricultural but commercial. The old country would seem to afford little scope for the great financial and commercial enterprises with which Hebrews have been identified for past generations. The problem is far from being a

simple or an easy one. All that we can say is, that the country is waiting for the people, and many of the people are looking to the country, and that events seem to be slowly moving towards a consummation that will unite the two.

Destiny of the Jews.

The distinction of Jew and Gentile has disappeared, so far as the privileges of the Gospel are concerned. All are "one in Christ." If ever Jews shall occupy a higher place than other believers in the kingdom of God, it will be in virtue of loftier faith, higher service, and holier lives, the fruits of the Holy Spirit. But the re-occupation of the land of Israel by the seed of Israel would involve no re-building of the middle wall which Christ abolished in His cross, having slain the enmity thereby. It would only be the completion of that marvellous testimony, which for well-nigh four thousand years the land of Israel has borne to the supernatural character of God's Revelation, in making known His saving grace and love to the children of men.

THE EARLY PREVALENCE

OF

MONOTHEISTIC BELIEFS.

BY THE

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Argument of the Tract.

The religious beliefs of the Semitic, Aryan, and Turanian nations, the Cushite races, the Egyptians, and the Chinese are surveyed, and it is shown that, with one exception only, Monotheism, either avowed or latent, absolute or qualified, is found everywhere underlying or struggling with a prevailing Polytheism, and is found most distinctly and clearly present in the earlier stages of the religions; moreover, that even in the case of the Romans, the one exception, there is in the name of Ju-piter a lingering reminiscence of a Monotheistic period. The different origins to which Monotheistic belief has been ascribed are examined, and it is shown that neither the religious instinct, which is a universal element in human nature, nor the exercise of enlightened reason upon the data furnished by observation and experience, can account for it, so that its origin must be sought in Divine revelation. The gradual decay of Monotheism until God revealed Himself in Christ is shown to be due to human apostacy from God—to men not liking to retain God in their knowledge. Finally, it is noted that Monotheism, after it has once been revealed, finds support in the religious instinct of the best men, and also in the conclusions of Reason.

EARLY PREVALENCE OF MONOTHEISTIC BELIEFS.

WHEN the inquirer into the past history of the human race turns his attention especially to the subject of men's religious beliefs, he seems at first sight to see everywhere in the ancient world polytheisms more or less multitudinous—vast and complicated arrangements of Divine beings, endued with different degrees of power, variously related to each other, and regarded by their worshippers with different degrees of veneration. Except in one small, and, historically speaking, insignificant community, monotheism is unapparent,—fails to assert itself boldly; if existent at all, is existent only below the surface, patiently suffering itself to be overlaid by an imposing superstructure of polytheism. Even in the single quarter which forms a manifest exception to the general rule—that of the Jewish, or rather the Hebrew, people—the monotheism, although pronounced, and on the whole paramount, is not all-prevailing or exclusive; a counter current of a directly opposite character contends with the monotheistic stream, like the Arctic current with the Gulf stream in the North

Polytheism apparent everywhere in the ancient world.

Monotheism apparent only in one small community.

Not all-prevailing or exclusive even there.

Atlantic Ocean, adown two-thirds of the course of history; the most monotheistic of all nations frequently falling for long periods of time under the influence of extremely degraded forms of polytheistic idolatry. Israel served gods other than Jehovah "on the further side of the flood" in "Ur of the Chaldees," and even in Haran; was given to idolatry in Egypt;[1] in the wilderness not only made themselves a calf, but "took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their god, Remphan, figures which they made to worship them;"[2] in Palestine, "forsook the Lord, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them . . . and served Baal and Ashtaroth."[3] Still this certain fact of the intermixture of the two counter beliefs among the favoured people may prepare us to find, without much surprise, that elsewhere also, where polytheism was even more rampant, an under-current of monotheistic belief existed and struggled with its adversary.

Idolatry in Israel.

Conversely, an under-current of monotheistic belief existed where polytheism was rampant.

In considering what traces there are of monotheistic beliefs among the early races of mankind, it will be desirable, both for the sake of clearness and of brevity, to begin by classifying the races. Now it is generally allowed that two families stand out from the rest of mankind as leading and principal ones. "The whole history of the civilised

Two outstanding races of mankind.

[1] Josh. xxiv. 14. [2] Acts vii. 43. [3] Judg. ii. 12, 13

world," says one writer, has hitherto been acted by two races only, the Semitic and the Aryan."[1] There are "two great noble races," writes another, which excel all the rest, and to which the civilisation of the world is chiefly due, the Aryans and the Semites. "The Semites excel other civilized races infinitely in vigour, in courage, in poetic genius, and in the sentiment of religion. The Aryans have the advantage over the Semites in political and military ability, in intellectual power, and in aptness for scientific speculation."[2] Side by side with these, but at a far lower level, is placed the family called generally Turanian; whilst outside of these three are noted a certain number of isolated and abnormal types—Cushites, Egyptians, Chinese, and others, either incapable of classification, or at any rate not yet classified. We propose to follow the ethnic enumeration here indicated, and to consider separately the cases of the Semitic nations, the Aryan nations, the Turanians, the Cushites, the Egyptians, and the people of China.

The Semitic and the Aryan.

Characteristics of the Semites.

Of the Aryans.

The Turanian family.

Isolated and abnormal types.

1.—The Semitic Nations.

The Semitic nations include, beside the Hebrews, the Phœnicians, the Syrians, the Arabians, the Moabites and Ammonites, the Assyrians, and the

Nations included in the Semitic race.

[1] Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I., p. 341.
[2] Renan, *Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, Vol. I., p. 491.

later Babylonians. It is noted of these nations generally, though there may be particular exceptions, that "they cannot conceive of there being contained in the notion of God any variety, plurality, or sex; the word "goddess" would be in their languages—or at least in some of them—the most horrible barbarism. Moreover, all the names by which they designate the Divine Nature, such as El, Eloh or Eloah, Adon, Baal or Bel, Shaddai, Jehovah, Allah, Elohim, even in the case where they are plural in form, imply the idea of supreme and incommunicable power, of absolute and perfect unity."[1] El means "strong," or "the strong one;" Baal or Bel, "the Lord;" Baal Samin, "the Lord of heaven;" Adonis (in Phœnicia), "Lord;" Marnas (at Gaza), "our Lord;" Shet or Set, "Master;" Moloch, Milcom, Malika, "King;" Eliun, "the Most High;" Shaddai, "the Almighty;" Ram or Rimmon, "the Exalted."[2] The fact that these names are the oldest names expressive of divinity in the Semitic languages, and the further fact, that, whatever corruption of religion took place among the Semitic nations, these names remained in use, were never parted with, but passed on from generation to generation as invaluable heirlooms, is strongly indicative of a monotheistic conviction lying deep in the heart of

Semitic conception of God.

Semitic names for the Divine nature.

Indicative of a monotheistic conviction in the heart of the race.

[1] *Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, pp. 5, 6.

[2] Max Müller, *Chips*, Vol. I., p. 363.

the race, congenital, and never under any circumstances eradicated.

We are often warned, however, that "*dolus latet in generalibus.*" Let us then proceed from the universal to the particular, from the Semitic race as a whole to the various nations of which it was composed. And first, with respect to the Arabs. The Arabs, we are generally told, were polytheistic idolaters until the time of Mohammed. Mohammed was the founder of monotheism among them. But it conflicts with this view, in the first place, that Herodotus can mention two divinities only whom the Arabs of his day worshipped;[1] and, in the second place, that these two, being a male and a female, are according to Semitic notions, respectively the personal supreme God, and an abstract term expressive of the mere idea of Deity.[2] Urotal is probably identical with the *Allah taâla*, or "exalted god," of the Arabic writers, whose worship has always lain at the root of the religion of Arabia; and Alitat is Allat, the feminine correspondent of Allah, not originally a goddess, though ultimately worshipped as one, but a term like *deitas* or *divinitas*, the abstract of which the concrete is *Allah taâla*. "Long before Mohammed," says Professor Max Müller, "the primitive intuition of God made itself felt in Arabia."[3] The following is an

Particular Semitic races.—1. The Arabs.

Not originally polytheists.

The primitive intuition of God felt in Arabia long before Mohammed.

[1] Herod. iii. 8. [2] Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, p. 183.
[3] *Chips*, Vol. i., p. 376.

Arab prayer older than the Koran.

"old prayer," not contained in the Koran, and almost certainly anterior to it. "I dedicate myself to thy service, O God; thou hast no companion, except thy companion of whom thou art absolute master, and of whatever is his." Quite certainly anterior to Mahommed is the verse in the Moallaka of Zoheyr—"Try not to hide your secret feelings from the sight of Allah—Allah knows all that is hidden." [1]

The Book of Job.

The Book of Job breathes the true spirit of Arabia, though the *dramatis personæ* are perhaps rather Aramæans than Arabs. At any rate, they are Semites, and give us a most remarkable illustration of early Semitic—as we believe, of Arabian—

Monotheistic throughout.

monotheism. There is not a suspicion of polytheism in the entire composition, not a phrase uttered by any of the speakers which derogates from the transcendent power and majesty of the one great Ruler and Creator. "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" says Eliphaz; "shall a man be more pure than *his Maker?* Behold, he puts no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly. How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust! . . . Happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of *the Almighty*." "Doth God pervert judgment?" says Bildad, "or doth *the Almighty* pervert

[1] *Chips*, Vol. I., p. 377.

justice? If thy children have *sinned against him*, and he have cast them away for their transgression, if thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to *the Almighty* . . . . though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase." "Canst thou by searching find out God?" exclaims Zophar. "Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven—what canst thou do; deeper than hell—what canst thou know?"[1]

The speeches of Elihu.

Take again a specimen from the speeches of Elihu: "Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out. He draws towards him the mists from the waters, which pour down as rain, and form their vapours. . . . He charges the night with damp vapours; He drives before him the thunder-bearing cloud. It is driven from one side to the other by his command, to execute all that he ordains on the face of the universe, whether it be to punish his creatures, or to make thereof a proof of his mercy."[2]

Date of the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is by some assigned to a comparatively late date, and the vocabulary savours certainly of the later Hebrew; but the form, the ideas, the simplicity of the style, and the state of

[1] Job iv. 17, 19; v. 17; viii. 3–7.

[2] Job xxxvi. 26, 27; xxxvii. 11–13. The translation of M. Renan is followed (*Livre de Job*, Paris, 1859).

Archbishop Usher's date probably correct.

society depicted are primitive, and the date of B.C. 1520, conjecturally assigned by Archbishop Usher, and inserted commonly in the margins of our Bibles, is far from being extravagant.

The Phœnicians not originally polytheists.

The Phœnicians are generally regarded as polytheists and idolaters; and certainly there was a time in the history of the nation when the term "polytheists" would have been applied to them with truth. But M. Renan has argued with much show of reason, that originally it was otherwise.[1]

Their religious terminology anti-polytheistic.

The names Eliun, Shaddai, Adonai, Baal-samin, which belong to the Phœnician religious terminology, are, one and all, protests against polytheism, and point to a time when the nation recognised a single Supreme Being. Eliun, the God of Melchizedek,[2] is a superlative, rightly translated in our Authorised Version "the Most High." He is placed by Philo-Byblius at the head of the Phœnician theogony, and is called in mythological language the father of Uranus, or heaven.[3] Originally, He must have been to the Phœnicians what He was to Melchizedek, "the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth."[4] Shaddai, which has been detected in a Phœnician inscription,[5]

[1] See his *Considérations sur le caractère général des peuples Sémitiques*, Paris, 1859.

[2] Gen. xiv. 18.

[3] *Philo-Bybl.*, c. iii., § 1.

[4] Gen. xiv. 19.

[5] De Vogué, *Mélanges d'Archéologie*, p. 77.

if not exactly a superlative, has a superlative force. It is well translated "Almighty,"[1] and is used in the Hebrew Scriptures as an equivalent of Jehovah and Elohim. The name witnesses to a time when the Phœnicians knew of but One who was powerful, the source whence all other power was derived, the mighty, all-mighty, God. So with Adonai. Adonai is "my Lord," and can only have been made a divine appellative by one who recognised a single supernatural Being, whom he could feel to be his Lord exclusively. Baal-samin, "the Lord of heaven," is less manifestly exclusive, since we might imagine him placed on an equality with a "Lord of Earth," and a "Lord of the Lower Regions;" but in the Phœnician system this was not so. Baal-samin, as Philo-Byblius distinctly informs us,[2] was "the only God"—not the Lord of heaven merely, but the Lord of all things.

Phœnician names for God.

Further, just as these four names, which designate clearly, each of them, the supreme God, must be viewed as honorific titles of one and the same being, expressive of his various aspects or attributes, so it may reasonably be held, with regard to the greater number of the other Phœnician (so-called) deities, *e.g.*, El, Sadyk, Melkarth, Baal, Molech, Hadad, that they were originally terms of the same character—mere epithets of the one eternal and divine Person who was felt to rule the universe.

Supposed names of other Phœnician deities really epithets of the one eternal Being.

[1] Gen. xvii. 1.

[2] *Philo-Bybl.*, l. s. c.

El means "Strong," Sadyk, "Just," Baal, "Lord," Molech, "King," Melkarth, "City-King." All are terms suitable to be applied to the one true God, and all therefore may have been so intended at the first. If they do not prove an original monotheism, at least they do not militate against it.

Astarté expresses the energy of the deity.

Even the position held by Astarté (Ashtoreth) in the Phœnician system is not incompatible with monotheistic belief. Like Allat or Alitat in Arabia, Astarté would express "the energy or activity, or the collective powers of the deity,"[1] and would be the logical complement of Baal, as the abstract is the complement of the concrete. Hence Ashtoreth is called in one Phœnician inscription "the name of Baal;"[2] and in another her counterpart, Tanath, is called "the face of Baal;" while the Moabite Stone gives us the complex *Ashtar-Chemosh* as a single deity.[3]

The primitive Phœnician belief according to Philo.

The primitive Phœnician belief is well expressed in the words of Philo: "The ancient races of Phœnicia, in time of drought, lifted their hands heavenward to El. For him they considered the only God, the Lord of heaven, calling him Belsamin, which with the Phœnicians is 'lord of heaven,' but with the Greeks, Zeus."[4]

[1] Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, p. 183. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[3] *Records of the Past*, Vol. XI., p. 166.
[4] *Philo-Bybl.*, c. iii., § 1.

But little is known of the religious beliefs of the early Syrians, the Moabites, or the Ammonites. In connection with Syria, we hear however of four deities, Hadad, Rimmon, Adonis, and the Dea Syra or Astarté. It may be suspected, but it cannot be proved, that the first three were identical, and that Astarté occupied a similar position in Syria to that which belonged to her in Phœnicia. The Moabites and Ammonites appear in Scripture as monotheists, each nation worshipping only one God — the Moabites Chemosh, the Ammonites Milcom or Molech, who are called their "abominations,"[1] because they worshipped them under human forms and with bloody rites. Mesa's inscription—our only Moabite document—is entirely harmonious with Scripture. It is the composition of a monotheist, whose god is called indifferently Chemosh, and Ashtar-Chemosh. The monotheism of the Moabites in early times is further strongly marked by the entire history of Balak and Balaam, where Balaam's God is "Jehovah," and where he expresses himself in such terms as the following: "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"[2] "Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said which heard the

The deities of Syria.

The Moabites and Ammonites monotheistic.

Balak and Balaam.

[1] 1 Kings xi. 5, 7.

[2] Num. xxiii. 19.

Balaam.

words of God, which saw the vision of *the Almighty*."[1] "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD (Jehovah), or bow myself before THE HIGH GOD? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with *thy God?*"[2]

Polytheism rampant in Assyria and Babylonia.

In Assyria and Babylonia, on the contrary, as we know them from the inscriptions, polytheism seems to have been pronounced and rampant from a very remote date. The inscriptions of the earliest Babylonian monarchs[3] present to us at least fifteen deities, who seem to be nearly upon a par, and among whom at any rate there is no one that stands out prominently from the rest, or that can be regarded as possessed of supreme power. In Assyria the most ancient inscription of any length shows us ten gods of apparently equal dignity,[4] while the next in date adds to the list six others. In this latter inscription eight deities are expressly

[1] Num. xxiv. 4. [2] Micah vi. 6-8.

[3] See *Records of the Past* (English translations of the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments by Birch, Rawlinson, Sayce, and others. Bagster), Vol. III., pp. 6-20; Vol. V., pp. 53-85; Vol. VII., pp. 3-8. [4] *Ibid.*, Vol. XI., pp. 3-6.

called "great gods." Subsequently, in the reign of Esarhaddon, we find a mention of "sixty great gods" as "strong ones," who guide the life of the king.[1] Yet notwithstanding all this open display, not to say parade, of polytheism, there are not wanting indications of a counter current of monotheism, manifesting itself from time to time, in part personal, in part ethnic, or underlying the religion of the whole nation. A personal monotheism is shown in the preference of individual kings for this or that deity, and in the elevation of the favourite to a markedly first place in the inscriptions of the particular monarch. Tiglath-pileser I. assigns such a position to Asshur,[2] whom he calls "the great Lord, *ruling supreme over the gods*, the giver of sceptres and crowns, the appointer of sovereignty." Asshur is "his Lord," prompts his expeditions, gives his armies strength and power, strikes terror into the hearts of his enemies, grants him all his wishes, establishes him in the government of Assyria, makes his name celebrated to posterity. Though many other gods are acknowledged, no one of them comes near to Asshur, either in power or in dignity. With Nebuchadnezzar the ruling and prominent god is Merodach.[3] Merodach is "his Maker," the god "who deposited

Indications of a counter-current of monotheism not wanting.

Personal monotheism.

Tiglath-pileser's choice of Asshur as his god.

Nebuchadnezzar's choice of Merodach as his god.

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. XI., p. 63.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. V., pp. 7–23.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. V., pp. 113–129; Vol. VII., pp. 71–78.

Titles of Merodach.

his germ in his mother's womb," and who "assigned him the empire over multitudes of men." His titles are "the Great Lord," "the Divine Prince," "the Lord of the house of the gods," "the Lord of all beings," "the Lord of lords," "the Lord God," "the Lord of the gods," "the chief, the honourable, the Prince of the gods," "the King of gods," "the King of heaven and earth," "the deity of heaven and earth," "the light of the gods," and "the God of gods." No other deity has any of these titles in Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions, or at all approaches to the greatness and power of Merodach. Neriglissar follows Nebuchadnezzar's example;[1] but Nabonidus, the last monarch, has a new favourite. With him, Sin, the moon-god, is "the Great Divinity," "the King of gods upon gods," and "the chief and King of the gods of heaven and earth."[2]

The favourite god of Nabonidus.

Monotheism of Assyro-Babylonian mythology.

The latent national monotheism is most apparent in some of those curious legends wherein the Assyro-Babylonian mythology presents remarkable analogies with the narrative of Genesis. The legend of creation, as recorded by Berosus,[3] is monotheistic, the entire direction of the work being ascribed to a single deity, Belus or Bel, who cuts

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. v., pp. 139–142.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 145–8.

[3] See the fragments of Berosus in the *Frag. Hist. Gr.*, Vol. II., Fr. 1.

the darkness in two, and separates earth from heaven, and orders the world, and forms men and beasts, and creates also the stars, the sun, the moon, and the five planets. The participation of other gods in the work is represented as subordinate to his, and, in fact, as ministerial. Similarly, in the "Creation Tablets" recently brought from Mesopotamia, though several gods are mentioned, one only appears as the Creator, apparently Anu.[1] "He constructed dwellings for the great gods," we read; "he fixed up the constellations, whose figures were like animals; he made the year: into four quarters he divided it; twelve months he established, with their constellations, three by three. And for the days of the year he appointed festivals; he made dwellings for the planets—for their rising and setting. And, that nothing should go amiss, nor the course of any be retarded, he placed with them the dwellings of Bel and Hea. He opened great gates on every side; he made strong the portals, on the left hand and on the right. In the centre he placed luminaries: the moon he appointed to rule the night, and to wander through the night until the dawn of the day. . . . On the seventh day he appointed a holy day, and to cease from all business he commanded. Then arose the sun in the horizon of heaven in glory." In the tablet relating to the "War in Heaven," the narrative is again mono-

The legend of creation according to Berosus.

According to the Mesopotamian creation-tablets.

Tablet relating to the war in heaven.

[1] See *Records of the Past*, Vol. IX., pp. 117-8.

Anu, king of heaven.

theistic.[1] Anu appears as "King of heaven," and the war is raised against him by the seven spirits who had been his messengers. The other gods are supporters of Anu, but clearly inferior and subordinate. The tale runs—

War against his dwelling-place.

"Against high heaven, the dwelling-place of Anu the king, they plotted evil, and there was none to withstand them. When Bel heard the news, he communed secretly with his own heart. Then he took counsel with Hea, the great Sage among the gods. And they stationed the Moon, the Sun, and Ishtar to keep guard over the approach to heaven. Unto Anu, *the ruler of heaven*, they told it, and those three gods, *his children*, to watch night and day without ceasing he commanded. When the Seven Spirits rushed upon the base of heaven, and close in front of the Moon advanced with fiery weapons, then the noble Sun and Vul the warrior side by side stood firm. But Ishtar and *Anu the king* entered the lofty dwelling, and hid themselves in the height of heaven. Then the evil spirits, the messengers of Anu the king, they who had plotted evil, from mid heaven, like meteors, rushed upon the earth. Bel, who saw from heaven the noble Moon eclipsed, called aloud to Paku, his messenger: 'O Paku, O my messenger, carry my words to the deep; tell my son that the moon in heaven is terribly eclipsed. Repeat this to Hea in the deep.'

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. v., pp. 163–6.

Paku understood the words of his lord; unto Hea in the deep swiftly he went. To the Lord, the Great Inventor, the god Nukimmut (*i.e.*, Hea), Paku repeated the words of his lord. When Hea in the deep heard these words, he bit his lips, and tears bedewed his face. Then sent he for his son Merodach to help him: 'Go to my son Merodach,' he said; 'tell my son that the moon in heaven is terribly eclipsed. That eclipse has been seen in heaven!' They are seven, those evil spirits, and death they fear not! They are seven, those evil spirits, who are rushing like a hurricane, and falling like firebrands on the earth. In front of the bright Moon with fiery weapons [they draw nigh]; but the noble Sun and Vul the warrior [withstand them]."[1]

Anu's place in the story of the Tower of Babel.

The story of the confusion of tongues on the occasion of building the Tower of Babel places Anu in a similar position of pre-eminence;[2] and there are also a number of prayers, where the deity addressed is not named, in which the heart seems to be lifted up to the One God, the God who is above all gods, and to pour itself out before Him.

Prayer of a penitent to the one God.

"O my Lord," says a penitent, "my sins are many, my trespasses are great, and the wrath of the gods has plagued me with disease, and with sickness and sorrow. I fainted, but no one stretched forth his

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. v., pp. 164–6.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. vii., pp. 131–2

hand! I groaned, but no one heard! O Lord! do not abandon thy servant; in the waters of the great stream, do thou take his hand; the sins which he has committed, do thou turn to righteousness!"[1] "O thou," exclaims another, "thy words who can resist? who can rival them? *Among the gods*, thy brothers, *thou hast no equal!*"[2] The following is equally monotheistic:

Other monotheistic prayers.

"In heaven who is great? Thou alone art great!
On earth who is great? Thou alone art great!
When thy voice resounds in heaven, the gods fall prostrate!
When thy voice resounds on earth, the genii kiss the dust!"[3]

and the subjoined:

"The God my Creator, may He stand by my side!
Keep thou the door of my lips! Guard thou my hands,
O Lord of light!"[4]

2.—The Aryan Nations.

The Aryan nations known to us in antiquity are scarcely more than four—the Sanskritic Indians, the Iranians, the Greeks, or Hellenes, and the Romans. Other Aryan tribes and peoples, such as the Phrygians, Lydians, Thracians, Celts, and ancient Germans, have left so few remains, and have obtained such slight notice from the literary races contemporary with them, that their religious beliefs cannot be guaged satisfactorily with the

Four chief Aryan nations.

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. III., p. 136.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 136.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Sources of information as to their religious views.

means at present at our disposal. We have, however, the sacred books of the early Persians and Indians, together with a few inscriptions of the former people, while the Greeks and Romans exhibit their belief to us in a thousand ways, in their plastic art, in their poetry, in their philosophy, in their inscriptions, in their language, in their literature generally, so that their religious views are almost as well known to us as those of any nation existing at the present day. From these materials, then, it should not be difficult to decide whether or not monotheistic ideas were cherished by the four nations in question, either continuously through the whole course of their history, or in its more ancient period.

Sanskritic Indian religion at first sight intensely polytheistic.

The religion of the early Sanskritic Indians is, in outward appearance and at first sight, intensely polytheistic. "No doubt," says Professor Max Müller,[1] the best authority on the subject, "the religion of the Veda is polytheism, not monotheism. Deities are invoked by different names, some clear and intelligible, as Agni, *fire;* Süriya, *the sun;* Ushas, *dawn;* Maruts, *the storms;* Prithivî, *the earth;* Ap, *the waters;* Nadi, *the rivers;* others, such as Varuna, Mitra, Indra, which have become proper names, and disclose but dimly their original application to the great aspects of nature, the sky, the sun, the day." Thirty-three gods are acknow-

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I., pp. 27-8.

ledged by some Vedic poets, others count more; in one place the number is said to be 1339. But beneath all this multitudinous array of gods in crowds upon crowds, a sagacious eye discovers a double monotheism—one palpable, but of a peculiar kind, not perhaps what the word monotheism is ordinarily understood to express; the other, truer, higher, more refined, but latent. The first has been called Henotheism, or Kathenotheism.[1]

Underlying monotheism.

The single god invoked as good as all gods to the Vedic worshipper.

"Whenever one of the individual gods is invoked [by a Vedic worshipper], they are not conceived as limited by the powers of others, as superior or inferior in rank. Each god is, to the mind of the suppliant, as good as all gods. He is felt at the time as a real divinity—as supreme and absolute, without a suspicion of those limitations which, to our minds, a plurality of gods must entail on every single god. All the rest disappear for a moment from the vision of the poet, and he only who is to fulfil their desires stands in full light before the eyes of the worshippers. . . . It would be easy to find, in the numerous hymns of the Veda, passages in which almost every important deity is represented as absolute and supreme."[2] Of Indra it is said: "The gods do not reach thee, O Indra, nor men; thou overcomest all creatures in strength."

All others disappear for the moment from his vision.

[1] Max Müller, *Chips*, Vol. I., pp. 28, 354; *Science of Religion* p. 141.

[2] *Chips*, Vol. I., pp. 27–8.

Of Varuna: "Thou art Lord of all, of heaven and earth; thou art the King of all, both of those who are angels, and of those who are men." Of Agni: "Thou art the Ruler of the universe, the Lord of men;" and so of the rest. Thus the religion, taken as a whole, is polytheistic; but the worshipper is not a polytheist. It is his habit to fix his eye on one god at a time, and to give him his undivided homage. He does not fritter away his religious sentiment by parcelling it out among many objects.

The religion polytheistic, but the worshipper not a polytheist.

And latent in the Veda there is found, occasionally, real monotheism. Here and there breaks forth a real "consciousness that all the deities are but different names of one and the same Godhead"[1]—different attempts to realise and exhibit different sides, or phases, so to speak, of that single Infinite Being, whom the heart and intellect of man alike crave as their true support and stay. "Wise poets," we read in one place, "make the beautiful-winged, though He is One, manifold by words."[2] And in another—"They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni; then He is the beautiful-winged heavenly Garutmat: that which is one, the wise call it in divers manners; they call it Agni, Yama, Mâtarisvan."[3]

Some real consciousness of the unity of God in the Veda.

The religion of the ancient Iranians, as it has

[1] *Chips*, Vol. I., p. 29. [2] *Rig-Veda*, x. 114, 5.
[3] *Ibid.*, I., 164, 46.

Iranian religion in the Zend-Avesta generally regarded as dualistic.

come down to us in the Zend-Avesta, is generally regarded as Dualism, or a belief in two eternal uncreated Beings, one a Principle of Good, the other a Principle of Evil, between whom there has ever been in the past, and will ever continue to be in the future, a fierce and irreconcilable quarrel. This was the feature of the religion which Aristotle noticed as its main characteristic,[1] and it is that which impresses itself most strongly on modern students of the Zend-Avesta. In portions of this sacred volume, which are of a very high antiquity, if not of the highest, Dualism in a very positive and decided shape is clearly inculcated. Ormazd and Ahriman, Ahura-mazda and Angro-mainyus, are set forth distinctly as real persons; and the antagonism between them is depicted in the strongest colours; it is direct, bitter, and unceasing. Whatever good work Ormazd, the Principle of Good, in his benevolence creates, is marred and blasted by Ahriman, the Principle of Evil. If Ormazd forms a "delicious spot" in a world previously desert and uninhabitable, to become the first home of his favourites, the Iranians, Ahriman ruins it by sending into it a poisonous serpent, and at the same time rendering the climate one of the extremest severity. If Ormazd provides, instead of this blasted region, another charming habitation, "the second-best of regions and countries,"

The good work of Ormazd blasted by Ahriman.

[1] *Ap. Diog. Laert., Proœm.*, p. 2.

Ahriman sends there the curse of murrain, fatal to all cattle. To every land which Ormazd creates for his worshippers, Ahriman immediately assigns some plague or other. War, ravages, sickness, fever, poverty, hail, earthquakes, buzzing insects, poisonous plants, unbelief, witchcraft, and other inexpiable sins, are introduced by him into the various happy regions created without any such drawbacks by the good spirit; and a world, which should have been "very good," is by these means converted into a scene of trial and suffering.

The world thus converted into a scene of trial and suffering.

Such is the teaching of the first Fargard of the Vendidad,[1] which must have been composed before the eighth century B.C.; and such is the general teaching of the Zend-Avesta, considered as a whole. But here again, as in so many other cases, careful study is able to detect, below the surface, another and, it is believed, an older form of belief. The Gâthâs, metrical hymns inserted here and there into the Yasna, or "Book on Sacrifice," are found to be of a more archaic character than the rest of the sacred writings, and these are declared by the most competent authority[2] to contain no trace of Dualism. The Gâthâs recognise two classes of spiritual intelligences, the one good, pure, benignant; the other bad, impure, malevolent. They

An older form of belief traceable below the surface of the Zend-Avesta in which there is no dualism

[1] See Bunsen's *Egypt*, Vol. III., pp. 488–90.

[2] Dr. Martin Haug. (See his *Essays on the Sacred Language, etc., of the Parsees*, pp. 50–116.)

The Gathas monotheistic.

place at the head of the good intelligences a single pure and perfect Being; but they do not place any single malevolent being at the head of the bad intelligences. Consequently, they are monotheistic. They exhibit to us Ormazd as the source of all good, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe, the one proper object of man's highest worship. Ormazd is "the Creator of life, the earthly and the spiritual."[1] He has made "the celestial bodies; earth, water, and trees; all good creatures, and all good, true things."[2] He is "good, holy, pure, true, the holy God, the Holiest, the essence of truth, the Father of all truth, the best Being of all, the Master of purity."[3] He is supremely happy, possessing every blessing—"health, wealth, virtue, wisdom, immortality."[4] From him comes all good to man; on the pious and the righteous he bestows not only earthly advantages, but precious spiritual gifts, truth, devotion, "the good mind," and everlasting happiness; and as he rewards the good, so he punishes the bad, though this is an aspect in which he is but seldom represented. Dr. Haug considers that this conception of Ormazd is "*perfectly identical* with the notion of Elohim or Jehovah, which we find in the books of the Old

Ormazd in the Gathas.

[1] Haug's *Essays*, p. 257.

[2] See the Author's *Ancient Monarchies*, Vol. II., p. 324.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Haug's *Essays*, l. s. c.

Testament;"[1] and, though there may be some exaggeration in this statement, the resemblance is certainly considerable.

The monotheism underlying Greek polytheism.

That monotheism underlays the apparent polytheism of the Greeks has been frequently and widely recognised. Cudworth, in the seventeenth century, elaborated the point with a learning rare at the time,[2] and the best of modern writers on the Greek mythology, for the most part, admit it. Thirlwall speaks of the "principle of unity" observable in the Greek polytheism, which he imagines that the early poets had introduced into it![3] Welcker "draws with a sure and powerful hand the original character of the worship of Zeus, as *the* God, or, as he is called in later times, the Father of the gods, and the God of gods."[4] Professor Max Müller remarks, that "when we ascend to the most distant heights of Greek history, the idea of God as the Supreme Being stands before us as a simple fact."[5] At first the monotheism is of that unconscious kind which Homer assigns to the simple swineherd, Eumæus, who speaks of the deity very much "like one of ourselves." "Eat," he says to Ulysses, "and enjoy whatever is here; for God will grant one thing, and withhold another,

At first of an unconscious kind.

[1] Haug's *Essays*, l. s. c.

[2] *Intellectual System of the Universe*, Book I., ch. iv.

[3] *History of Greece*, Vol. I., p. 217.

[4] Max Müller, *Chips*, Vol. II., p. 148.

[5] *Ibid.*

Herodotus speaks of God absolutely.

just as He pleases in His mind, for He can do all things."[1] Similarly Herodotus speaks of God absolutely, as if he had never heard of polytheism. "Seest thou," he says, "how God with His lightning smites always the bigger animals, and will not suffer them to wax wanton, while those of a lesser bulk chafe Him not? How likewise His bolts fall ever on the highest houses and the tallest trees? So plainly does He love to bring down everything that exalts itself. Thus, ofttimes a mighty host is discomfited by a few men, when God in His jealousy sends fear or storm from heaven, and they perish in a way unworthy of them. For God allows no one to have high thoughts but Himself."[2]

Monotheism conscious when the polytheism has become rampant.

At a later date, when the polytheism has become rampant, the monotheism is conscious, and asserts itself with an emphasis unknown before. Take for example the famous passage ascribed to Sophocles:

Testimony of Sophocles.

> "There is in truth but One, One only God,
> Who made both heaven and long-extended earth,
> And bright-faced swell of sea, and force of winds."[3]

Here the tone is controversial, contradictious. One sees at once that the writer is confronted by an antagonistic school of thought, which denies the unity that he is bent on affirming, and main-

[1] Hom. *Odyss.*, xiv. 443–5.

[2] *Herod.* vii. 10, § 5.

[3] *Fr.* li. (Ed. Brunck.)

tains a plurality of divine beings. So in the no less celebrated passage of Xenophanes:

Of Xenophanes.

"'Mongst gods and men there is one mightiest God,
Not like to mortals, or in form, or thought—
Entire He sees, and hears, and understands—
And without labour governs all by mind."[1]

It is not necessary that we should go on and read—

"But mortals think that gods are born like them,
And have *their* senses, and *their* voice and form,"

in order to perceive that here again we have a controversialist, opposing himself to a belief which he regards as general, and staunchly maintaining the opposite. The one God thus confidently asserted was identified by still later writers with the old national God, Zeus (or Zên), "the Living One," as they understood the word; and long descriptions were given of His nature, and His relations towards man and the world. Aratus, the poet whom St. Paul quoted at Athens (Acts xvii. 28), said:

Of later writers.

The one God and Zeus identified.

"With Zeus begin we—let no mortal voice
Leave Zeus unpraised. Zeus fills the haunts of men,
The streets, the marts—Zeus fills the sea, the shores,
The harbours,—everywhere we live in Zeus.
We are His offspring too; friendly to man,
He gives prognostics; sets men to their toil
By need of daily bread: tells when the land
Must be upturned by ploughshare or by spade—
What time to plant the olive or the vine—
What time to fling on earth the golden grain.

Description of Aratus.

[1] See the *Frag. Philos. Gr.*, Vol I., p. 101.

For He it was who scattered o'er the sky
The shining stars, and fixed them where they are—
Provided constellations through the year,
To mark the seasons in their changeless course.
Wherefore men worship Him, the First, the Last,
Their Father, Wonderful, their help and shield."[1]

Zeus in the Orphic poems.

The Orphic poems are of uncertain date and origin; but there is a genuine Greek ring in the following lines:—

"The Thunderer, Zeus, is First, and Zeus is Last;
Zeus is the Head, the Midst—all comes from Zeus.
Zeus is both male and female from all time;
Earth's fundament, and starry heaven's, is Zeus.
Zeus is the breath of all, the force of fire,
Zeus is deep ocean's root, the Sun, the Moon—
Zeus is the King, the one true source of all—
One Power, one Deity, one mighty Lord!"[2]

If it be asked, how then was the polytheism so patent everywhere in the art, the architecture, the poetry, the general literature of the Greeks, understood by those who thus wrote, and thought, and felt, the answer would seem to be twofold. By the greater number the other gods were viewed as real beings, but as subordinate to Zeus, who had created them and ruled over them. "The Olympian deities were assembled round Zeus as his family, in which he maintained the mild dignity of a patriarchal king. He assigned them their several provinces, and controlled their authority. Their combined efforts could not give the slightest shock

The other gods viewed as subordinate to Zeus.

[1] Aratus, *Phænomena*, ll. 1–15.

[2] See the *Frag. Philos. Gr.*, Vol. I., p. 169.

to his power, nor retard the execution of his will; and hence their waywardness, even when it incurred his rebuke, could not ruffle the inward serenity of his soul."[1] The rest of the gods were servants, agents, instruments of the great Zeus—not always very docile or obedient instruments, but impotent when compared with him, and quite powerless to thwart him.

Not always very docile.

With a few the matter was understood differently. These persons, like the Vedic poet quoted above,[2] instead of recognising a number of personalities as employed in governing the world, held that a single Being directed and ruled all things by his own unaided strength, and regarded the popular deities as merely so many names given to the One God, designating his various functions and activities in the different parts of nature. It is to a thinker of this kind that we must ascribe the lines—

The popular deities regarded by few as names given to the one God.

> "There is one Zeus, one Hades, one Dionysus,
> One Sun, one God in all things—why do I
> Speak of them to thee separately?"[3]

The same view is set forth more at length in the following Orphic passage—

> "The Nymphs are water, fire Hephæstus, corn
> Demeter, and the sea Poseidon's might
> Or Enosichthon; Ares is war, and peace
> Soft Aphrodité; wine that God has made

[1] Thirlwall, *History of Greece*, Vol. I., p. 218.
[2] Page 23.
[3] *Frag. Philos. Gr.*, Vol. I., p. 169.

> To be consoler of the ills of man
> Is Dionysus; Themis is the right
> Men render each to each; Apollo too,
> And Phœbus, and Asclepius, who doth heal
> Diseases, are the sun—*all these are One.*" [1]

Monotheism but faintly apparent in the religion of ancient Rome.

In the religion of ancient Rome monotheism is but faintly apparent. Our notices of the religion are not very numerous until the time when Rome had fallen intellectually under Greek influence, and when the poetry and philosophy of Italy were faint reflections of the light which streamed from the opposite side of the Adriatic. At this late date, when men's minds were saturated with Grecian thought, acknowledgments of the divine unity are perhaps as frequent and as full as in Greece itself. Jupiter is "the supreme ruler over gods and men,"[2] "the ruler and father of the gods,"[3] "He who rules the affairs of gods and men by his eternal edicts."[4] One writer describes him as

Testimony to it abundant when men's minds were saturated with Grecian thought.

> "Almighty Jove, the King of kings and gods,
> Father of gods and mother, one and all."[5]

Lacking in the more ancient remains.

But in the more ancient remains such testimony is wanting. "To the Romans of the earliest times whereof we have any trace Jove was no more than one god out of many—the god especially of the air,

[1] *Frag. Philos. Gr*, Vol. I., p. 169.

[2] Plaut., *Rudens*, Prol. l. 9. [3] Ovid, *Met.* ii. 848.

[4] Virg., *Æn.* I. 229, 230.

[5] Valerius Soranus (quoted by Cudworth), *Int. System*, p. 366.

the sky, the firmament—who sent down lightning from above, gave rain, directed the flight of birds, and, as Ve-Jovis, impregnated the atmosphere with fever and pestilence."[1] He was assigned a superiority, even a presidency, over the other gods, and was commonly addressed as "Optimus Maximus"—"best and greatest;"—but there is no evidence that he was regarded as a fount of deity, or that the paternity implied in his name (Ju-piter = Ζεῦ-πάτερ) was considered to extend to the celestial beings who were conjoined with him in all solemn invocations. Rather, that paternity was in the strictest sense a human one. Jupiter was regarded as having brought, not the gods, but men into existence, and as standing to men in the relation of a father, upholding, supporting, protecting them. The term was a precious one, and lent itself readily to a monotheistic interpretation. It may well be that many a Roman used it, "gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far as far and as near as near can be," used it as a name at once "most exalted and yet most dear," as expressive of "both awe and love, the infinite and the finite,"[2] meaning by it something not very different from that which we ourselves mean when we utter the same thought in words divinely chosen, and that will endure for ever:

Jupiter regarded as the "best and greatest" but not as a fount of deity.

[1] See the Author's *Religions of the Ancient World*, p. 236.

[2] See Max Müller's *Science of Religion*, p. 173.

The Roman frame of mind not devotional.

"Our Father which art in heaven." But the Roman system scarcely encouraged such a frame of mind. It was not devotional; it repressed emotion, and practically confined religion to the performance of certain obligations under which men lay to the Higher Powers (*superi*).

3.—The Turanian Nations.

The Turanian nations deficient in taste or capacity for literature.

The Turanian nations are, for the most part, of an undeveloped type, and are particularly deficient in taste or capacity for literature. For a knowledge of their religious views we are therefore necessarily thrown in the main upon the accounts given of them by travellers, who have not always been sagacious or unprejudiced, or perhaps even truthful. Still, by selecting from among travellers those who seem to be the most trustworthy, we may probably arrive at conclusions not very remote from the truth.

It is generally held that the Scythians and Massagetæ of Herodotus were Turanian races, either absolutely, or at least predominantly. Assuming this to have been so, let us see what this writer tells us of the religions of these ancient people. Now, with respect to the Massagetæ, he distinctly and positively lays it down that they were monotheists. "They worship one god only," he says, "namely, the sun, and to him they offer

The Massagetæ were monotheists.

the horse in sacrifice."[1] Sun-worship is certainly a very low form of monotheism, but still it is a form; and nations which regard the sun, not as merely so much fiery matter, but as a body inhabited and pervaded by a great, living, wise, all-seeing and all-sustaining spirit, do not fall so very far short of other monotheists in their religious conceptions. Of the Scythians, Herodotus says,[2] that they worship eight gods; and so far, they were no doubt polytheists; but among the eight gods is one whose name he gives as Papæus, and this god he identifies with the Greek Zeus, the father of the gods, and therefore the only eternal and true god. Etymologically, the name Papæus is clearly "father;" and thus the Scythians *may*, at any rate, have been monotheists, in the same sense as so many of the Greeks were.[3]

Sun-worship a low form of monotheism.

One God supreme among the eight gods of the Scythians.

Menander, a Byzantine historian, one of the first to give us any trustworthy notices of the Turks, informs us that in his time (about A.D. 580) "they worshipped the fire, the water, and the earth, but that at the same time they believed in a God, the Maker of the world, and offered to Him sacrifices of camels, oxen, and sheep."[4]

The Turks believed in a Maker of the world.

The medieval travellers, Plano Carpini and Marco Polo, relate "that the Mogul tribes paid great reverence to the sun, the fire, and the water,

[1] Herod., I. 216. [2] *Ibid.*, IV. 59. [3] See above, p. 30.

[4] Quoted by Max Müller, in his *Science of Religion*, p. 199.

The Mogul tribes believed in a great and powerful God.

but that they believed also in a great and powerful God, whom they called *Natagai* or *Itoga*."[1]

The Tungusic tribes and the Samoyedes believed in a Supreme Being—a higher Divine Power.

Castren says of the Tungusic tribes, who are nearly related to the Mongols: "They worship the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, fire, and the spirits of forests, rivers, and certain sacred localities; they worship even images and fetishes; but with all this they retain a faith in a Supreme Being, which they call *Buga*."[2] Of the Samoyedes he tells us—"They worship idols, and various natural objects; but they always profess a belief in a higher Divine Power, which they call *Num*."[3]

Monotheism of the later Mongols.

A remarkable letter, addressed by Kuyuk Khan, a grandson of the great Jinghis, to Pope Innocent IV. in the year A.D. 1246, contains strong evidence of the monotheism of the Mongols at that period. The Pope had invited the Mongolian chiefs and people to submit to baptism and become Christians; while at the same time he had complained of the great slaughter of Christians made by the Mongols in Hungary, Poland, and Moravia. Kuyuk replies: "We slaughtered them because they were not obedient to the law of God and of Jinghis Khan; on which account God ordered that they should be exterminated, and delivered them into our hands. Otherwise, had not God done it, what could man do to man? You dwellers in the west adore God,

[1] Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, p. 199.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

and believe yourselves the only Christians, and despise others; but how know you on whom He deigns to confer His favour? *We Mongols adore God;* and in His strength we will destroy the whole earth from the east even to the west. If man were not the strength of God, what power would he have?"[1] The date of this letter is prior to the conversion of the first Mongol prince to Mohammedanism,[2] and it must therefore represent the old national Mongol religion.

4.—The Cushite Races.

Not much known of religious opinions of the Cushites.

The Cushite races occupied a narrower area than either the Semites, the Aryans, or the Turanians, and not very much is known of their religious opinions. In Ethiopia, their proper and original country, the primitive faith of the people was so overlaid by accretions which were derived from Egypt, that scarcely more than a single fragment of the real native formation is discoverable among the foreign accumulations. This isolated fragment is the god Totun, to whom the Egyptian Pharaohs built temples on the Upper Nile, and whom they associated with the greatest of their own deities.[3] It may be suspected that Totun was

The Ethiopian god Totun perhaps the Supreme God.

[1] See Mr. H. H. Howarth's *History of the Mongols*, Vol. II., p. 74.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[3] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, pt. iii. pls. 66, 67.

the supreme god of the "Ethiopians above Egypt," and that the Egyptians therefore adopted him, as they did Baal from Tyre, and Anaïtis from Syria. At the same time it must be allowed that these are but slight grounds upon which to determine anything with respect to the general character of the Ethiopian religion.

The Babylonian god Ra represented the Supreme Being.

The Cushite deposit in Babylonia, whence arose the earliest Mesopotamian civilisation, furnishes one or two indications which are perhaps of more importance. At the head of the early Babylonian Pantheon stood a god called Ra,[1] perhaps identical with the Egyptian deity of the same name, but a god of a vague and indefinite character, a shadowy personage, without distinct attributes or any special sphere. The Assyrians found for his name an equivalent in their word "Il," which expressed the pure notion of divinity, corresponding to "El" in Hebrew. It can scarcely be doubted that this "Ra" was the supreme Being. Babylon was dedicated to him, and was originally called Ka-Ra, "the gate of Ra," whereof "Bab-il" is the Semitic translation. It is not improbable that Ra is the *Sar-ili*, or "King of the gods," to whom Urukh, the earliest monumental king, dedicated a temple at Zerghul.[2] At any rate, the recognition of a "King of the gods" at this early date (about

[1] Sir H. Rawlinson in the Author's *Herodotus*, Vol. I., p. 608.
[2] *Records of the Past*, Vol. III., p. 10.

B.C. 2300) is important, and must be regarded as indicative of the monotheistic idea, which here as elsewhere, underlay the polytheism that formed the creed of the multitude.

In Susiana, where we find a third Cushite deposit, disguised under the terms Kis, Kissia, Kossæa, Kusán, Khuzistan, the god Nakhunta is denominated "the chief of the gods,"[1] and is the main object of worship to the nation.

Nakhunta the chief of the gods in Susiana.

It is disputed among ethnologists whether the Hyksôs, or "Shepherd kings" of the Egyptians, were a Semitic, a Turanian, or a Hamitic race. Regarding them as Hamitic, and so as closely connected with the Cushites, we may note in this place, that the Hyksôs (about B.C. 1850–1650) were not only monotheists themselves, but like the followers of Mohammed, insisted on imposing their monotheism on those whom they subjected to their sway. Apepi, traditionally the contemporary of Joseph, made proclamation that one god only—namely, Set or Sutech—was to be worshipped throughout his dominions, and sent an embassy to Ra-Sekenen, tributary king of Thebes, requiring his adherence to the principle of the proclamation.[2] The monotheism here proclaimed—nearly 2000 years B.C.—was not the mere superiority of one god to the rest, which prevailed so widely, but

The Shepherd kings of the Egyptians were monotheists.

Exclusive monotheism imposed by Apepi 2000 years B.C.

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. VIII., p. 83.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. VII., p. 3.

was rigorously exclusive. Its formula was not "There is a chief god," but "There is one only God whom men ought to worship."

5.—The Egyptians.

The monotheism of the more enlightened classes among the Egyptians, asserted by many of the classical writers, such as Plutarch, Horapollo, Jamblichus, Proclus, etc., and acknowledged by some of the Christian fathers, as Origen and Clemens Alexandrinus, has generally been allowed by modern scholars, and is scarcely now disputed by any one. Cudworth long ago remarked: "The Egyptians themselves also, notwithstanding their multifarious polytheism and idolatry, had an acknowledgment among them of one supreme and universal Numen."[1] Sir G. Wilkinson says: "The priests, who were initiated into, and who understood the mysteries of their religion, believed in one deity alone; and in performing their adorations to any particular member of the Pantheon, addressed themselves directly to the sole ruler of the universe, through that particular form. Each form (whether called Ptah, Amon, or any other of the figures representing various characters of the Deity) was one of his attributes; in the same manner as our expressions, 'the Creator,' 'the Omniscient,' 'the Almighty,' or

The monotheism of the enlightened classes of the Egyptians acknowledged.

The sole ruler of the universe addressed through the particular forms.

[1] *Intellectual System*, 1., 4, § 17, p. 308.

any other title, indicate one and the same Being."[1] M. Lenormant comes to a similar conclusion in his *Manuel d'Histoire Ancienne de l'Orient*;[2] while I have myself elsewhere expressed my own convictions as follows: "The primary doctrine of the esoteric religion [of the Egyptians] undoubtedly was the real essential unity of the divine nature. The sacred texts taught that there was a single Being, 'the sole producer of all things both in heaven and earth, Himself not produced of any.' 'the only true living God, self-originated,' 'who exists from the beginning,' 'who has made all things, but has not Himself been made.' This Being seems never to have been represented by any material, even symbolical, form. It is thought that He had no name, or, if He had, that it must have been unlawful either to pronounce it or write it. He was a pure spirit, perfect in every respect—all-wise, almighty, supremely good. The gods of the popular mythology were understood, in the esoteric religion, to be either personified attributes of the deity, or parts of the nature which He had created, considered as informed and inspired by Him. Num or Kneph represented the creative mind, Phthah the creative hand or act of creating, Maut represented matter, Ra the sun, Khons the moon, Seb the earth, Khem the generative power in nature, Nut the

Terms used of the Supreme Being by the Egyptians.

The gods of the popular mythology were personified attributes of the deity.

[1] *Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. II., p. 476 (Birch's Edition).

[2] *Manuel*, Vol. I., p. 522.

upper hemisphere of heaven, Athor the lower world or under hemisphere; Thoth personified the Divine wisdom; Ammon perhaps the Divine mysteriousness or incomprehensibility; Osiris (according to some) the Divine goodness. It is difficult in many cases to fix on the exact quality, act, or part of nature intended; but the principle admits of no doubt. No educated Egyptian priest certainly, probably no educated layman, conceived of the popular gods as really separate and distinct beings. All knew that there was but one God, and understood that when worship was offered to Khem, or Kneph, or Phthah, or Maut, or Thoth, or Ammon, the one God was worshipped under some one of His forms, or in some one of His aspects. It does not appear that in more than a very few cases did the Egyptian religion, as conceived of by the initiated, deify created beings, or constitute a class of secondary gods, who owed their existence to the supreme God. Ra was not a sun-deity with a distinct and separate existence, but the supreme God acting in the sun, making His light to shine on the earth, warming, cheering, and blessing it; and so Ra might be worshipped with all the highest titles of honour, as indeed might any god, except the very few which are more properly called *genii*, and which correspond to the angels of the Christian system."[1]

These gods not conceived of by the educated as separate beings.

[1] *History of Egypt*, Vol. I., pp. 314–5.

It may be added that these views of the Divine nature are not gradually worked out by the ingenuity of sages or philosophers, but seem to have underlain the religion from the first. The earliest hymns are as monotheistic as the latest. It is the polytheism that grows and is elaborated, not the monotheism. In the political inscriptions the number of the gods worshipped continually increases, rising from about eight in the earliest times to between seventy and eighty in the latest. On the other hand, it is in one of the most ancient of the hymns[1] that we find Ammon addressed as Ra, and Horus, and Khem, and Atum, and Khepra, all in one, and given the titles of "the ancient of heaven," "the oldest of the earth," "the Lord of all existences," "the support of all things," "the One in His works, single among the gods," "the chief of all the gods," "the Father of the gods," "the Lord of truth," "the maker of things below and above," "the enlightener of the earth," "the Lord of eternity," "the Lord of adoration," "the maker everlasting," "the One alone with many hands," "the One alone without fear," etc., etc. Monotheism, at least in the form of henotheism, prevails in Egypt from the first, and is not gradually educed by reason out of a primeval polytheism.

Monotheism underlay the religion of Egypt from the first.

The gradual growth of polytheism.

No monotheistic development.

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. II., pp. 129–136.

6.—The Chinese.

The true nature of Chinese religion disputed.

The true nature of the Chinese religion has been much disputed, and especially its character in the more early times. Some have regarded it as atheistic, some as pantheistic, and others as a mere worship of multitudinous spirits (*shin*), ancestral and other. But the latest inquirers seem to be convinced that even Confucius, who endeavoured to say as little as possible on religious subjects, was a theist, and not only so, but a monotheist, a believer in one supreme God. "It is clear," says Professor Max Müller,[1] "from many passages, that with Confucius *Tien*, or the Spirit of Heaven, was the supreme Deity, and that he looked upon the other gods of the people, the spirits of the air, the mountains, and the rivers, the spirits also of the departed, very much with the same feelings with which Socrates regarded the mythological deities of Greece."

Confucius a monotheist.

Confucius a transmitter not a maker.

Nor was this an advance upon previous beliefs. Confucius stated in the most emphatic way that he invented nothing. He was essentially "a transmitter, not a maker."[2] Nay, more. It is one of the most marked characteristics of Confucius that he is reticent on the subject of religion, and that,

Reticent on the subject of religion.

[1] *Science of Religion*, p. 196.

[2] *Ibid.*, p 157.

as Professor Legge says,[1] "in his doctrine of God, he came short of the faith of the ancient sages." The early Chinese religion was far more decidedly and openly monotheistic than that of Confucius. "In the *She-King* and the *Shu-King*," observes the same great authority on Chinese antiquity,[2] "*Te* or *Shang-Te* appears as a personal being, ruling in heaven and on earth, the author of man's moral nature, the governor among the nations, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the bad. Confucius preferred to speak of heaven." The *Shu-King*, or *Book of History*, lays it down that each king on his accession is to offer sacrifice to "the Supreme Ruler." The comment explains, that the new king was to offer to "that High Imperial One, the Supreme Ruler, most honourable and without compare."[3] In the *Taou-tih-King*, the sacred book of the Lao-tse form of the Chinese religion, "the expressions applied to the Deity are such as 'infinite Supreme,' 'the honoured of heaven,' 'the first beginning,' 'the great original,' 'the infinitely perfect one,' and 'the ruler,' which is put in many places for God."[4] The following prayer from the same work will show the feelings with which their belief in such a Being impressed His worshippers:

The early Chinese religion openly monotheistic.

Royal sacrifice to Supreme Ruler.

Titles of the Deity in the *Taou-tih-King*.

[1] *Life of Confucius*, p. 100. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Medhurst, *Inquiry into Chinese Theology*, pp. 45–6.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

Prayer from sacred book of Lao-tse form of the Chinese religion.

"O thou perfectly honoured One of heaven and earth, the Root and Origin of a myriad energies, the great manager of boundless *kalpas*, do Thou enlighten my spiritual perceptions. Within and without the three worlds, the Logos or divine *Taou* is alone honourable, embodying in Himself a golden light. May He overspread and illumine my person; He whom we cannot see with the eye nor hear with the ear, who embraces and includes heaven and earth, may He nourish and support the multitude of living beings."[1]

It is thus evident that even in this outlying and remote section of the human race, so little brought into contact with others, there was an early monotheism, which was of a pure and decided character, but which gradually faded away, becoming first the negative and colourless theism of Confucius, and then sinking into oblivion before the greater attraction of spirit-worship, ancestral and natural.

II.

Results.

Our brief and rapid review of ancient religions must here terminate. The result is, that, with one exception, we have found everywhere monotheism, either avowed or latent, either absolute or qualified, and that in most cases we have found it most distinctly and clearly present in the earlier stages of the religion. Even in the one exception, that of the Romans, there is in the name of Ju-piter, necessarily connected as it is with Dyaus-pitar and Ζεῦ-πάτερ, and again in his

[1] Medhurst, *Inquiry*, l. s. c.

normal title of *Optimus Maximus* a lingering reminiscence of a monotheistic period, through which the nation had passed, and which they had left behind them. Elsewhere, monotheism, either unconscious, as that of Eumæus in Homer,[1] or conscious, as that of Xenophanes,[2] is everywhere prevalent, or at any rate existent, sometimes having sole possession of the field, as in several of the Semitic nations, sometimes battling with polytheism, as an adversary. In one or two instances, the monotheism is of the imperfect type, which has been called henotheism; but henotheism itself seems to require monotheism pure as the basis from which it originated.

How brought about.

Such being the circumstances which our investigation has revealed to us, it remains to inquire, what is the most probable account of the mode in which they were brought about. Monotheistic belief has been ascribed to three distinct origins. (*a*) A natural instinct implanted in man, or in some particular race of men; (*b*) The exercise of reason upon the data furnished by observation and experience; (*c*) Divine Revelation.

Explanations.

(*a*) In the face of the long prevalence of polytheism in the ancient world, and its continuance despite of contact with monotheistic nations, in India and elsewhere, it seems impossible to maintain that men are instinctively monotheists.

Men not instinctively monotheists.

[1] See above, p. 25. [2] Supra, p. 26.

Instinctively, men have doubtless a religious sentiment, a sense of dependence, a conviction that there is something above them in the world, something before which they must bow down and humble themselves. But can it be said that there is any instinct which pronounces that this "something" is One and Indivisible? To us it seems that the faculty of faith in man,—"that faculty, which, independent of, nay, in spite of, sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the Infinite under different names and under various disguises,"[1] does not off-hand pronounce anything as to the unity or plurality of that before which it prostrates itself, but simply apprehends it as a "something," which may be one or may be many. How else shall we account for the lower forms of religion—for African fetish-worship and Turanian shamanism, and Red-Indian totemism, and Chinese worship of *shin*? If the religious instinct, which we quite believe to be a universal element in human nature, were distinctly monotheistic, we cannot see how polytheism should ever have arisen, much less have obtained the enormous development which belongs to it in the past and in the present.

The faculty of faith does not pronounce as to the unity or plurality the supernatural power which it recognizes.

It is maintained by M. Renan that the instinct in question was a special privilege granted to the Semitic nations.[2] "Ce fut une de ses prémières

[1] Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, p. 17.

[2] *Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, pp. 5–7.

aperceptions."[1] But is it consonant with the justice of God, who is "no respecter of persons," to have given the most important of all mental endowments to one race only, while withholding it from others? Or is it consonant with the facts of history to say that monotheism was ever, in any real sense, the exclusive possession of the Semites? We have found it existing anciently among all the principal races of man. We have found it as much overlaid with polytheism among certain Semitic races, *e.g.*, the Babylonians and Assyrians, as it ever was among Aryans or Turanians. It is not very clear that the Semites, if we except from them the single nation of the Hebrews, have any marked advantage in respect of monotheistic convictions over their brethren of the other families of mankind.[2]

The religious instinct not a special privilege of any race.

(*b*) If monotheism, as it has existed in the world, were the result of the exercise of enlightened reason upon the data furnished by observation and experience, we should expect to find it the possession of those races only who were of a metaphysical and logical turn, endowed with keen intelligence and aptness for philosophic speculation. We should also expect to find it in the later, rather than in the earlier, stages of a nation's being, the accompani-

Monotheism not the result of the exercise of enlightened reason on the data furnished by observation and experience.

[1] *Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, p. 485.

[2] See this point well argued by Prof. Max Müller, in his *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I. "Article on *Semitic Monotheism*."

ment of far-advanced civilisation and refinement, the last outcome of subtle arguing and prolonged ratiocination. But it is notorious that the keen-witted, subtle, refined, philosophic, disputatious races, are exactly those whose tendency to monotheism is the slightest, and that such monotheism as is found among them, unless imported from without, belongs to their remoter rather than their more recent history. The Indians, with all their originality and depth of thought, their logical power and metaphysical acuteness, remain polytheists to the present day, and have produced no philosophical monotheism, but only the atheism of Buddha. China retrograded from the pronounced monotheism of the *Shu-King* to the negative indifferentism of Confucius, and thence to the materialism and general scepticism of to-day. Greece itself, though in the course of its manifold speculations producing a monotheistic school, found in Platonism no resting-place, but passed on through Aristotelianism to Pyrrhonism. "The world by wisdom knew not God," said the Apostle.[1] "On n'invente pas le monothéisme," says the modern historian.[2]

The monotheistic tendency the slightest in the most speculative races.

The Indians have produced no philosophical monotheism.

(*c*) If, therefore, monotheistic belief be neither an implanted instinct, nor the product of advanced thought and skilled reasoning, must not its origin be sought in Divine Revelation? According to Scripture, God revealed Himself to the first parents

Monotheism originated in revelation.

[1] 1 Cor. i. 21. [2] Renan, *Langues Sémitiques*, p. 5.

of the human race, walking in the garden with them, and showing Himself as One. Before and after the Flood, He revealed Himself to Noah as One, making a covenant with him and with his seed for ever. The fact of monotheism was thus made known, once and again, to the entire human race. It would naturally be passed on from father to son. For it to die out, men must have turned from God, have not chosen "to retain God in their knowledge,"[1] have become "vain in their imaginations," and suffered their "foolish hearts to be darkened." And this is what everywhere happened. But the tradition died out gradually. Our historical survey has shown us that in the early times, everywhere, or almost everywhere, belief in the unity of God existed—barbarous nations possessed it, as well as civilised ones—it underlay the polytheism that attempted to crush it—retained a hold on language and on thought—had from time to time its special assertors, who never professed to have discovered it—and so lingered on, gradually becoming more and more enfeebled, until "the times of ignorance" which God "had winked at" were past,[2] and a fresh revelation of the unity was made by the Gospel of Christ.

How it died out.

The tenacity of its hold on language and thought.

The revelation of God in Christ.

The actual historical basis of Monotheism in the world we hold then to be Revelation; but we do not intend to deny that the belief, thus introduced,

Revelation the historical basis of monotheism.

[1] Rom. i. 28. [2] Acts xvii. 30.

Monotheism has two further supports.

1. The improved instinct of the best men.

2. Enlightened reason, which shows the unity of God to be the most probable hypothesis.

Conclusion.

has further extraneous supports. The more man's nature is purified, the more clear-sighted become his instincts, the keener his spiritual vision. In the best men the religious instinct acquires a definiteness which is wanting generally, and reverting perhaps to its primitive condition before the Fall, apprehends the object of religious regard as One. Further, enlightened reason, taking into consideration all the phenomena, and dispassionately weighing every possibility, if it cannot demonstrate (as Spinoza supposed) the Unity of God, can at any rate show that Unity to be the most probable of all hypotheses. Thus the dogmatic teaching of Revelation upon this point does not stand alone, but has two independent supports, which vastly strengthen its hold upon mankind. The truth announced from heaven finds an echo in the heart of man, especially of the best men, who feel within them a witness to its reality; and the critical judgment, which must "prove all things," and "hold fast" nothing until it has been examined and shown to be "good," confirms and endorses the belief, which it finds more consonant to reason than any other.

THE WITNESS

OF

MAN'S MORAL NATURE

TO

CHRISTIANITY.

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Argument of the Tract.

THE existence of the moral nature of man, and the existence of Christianity as a religion whose doctrines are recorded in certain documents, and which is historical in its origin, and potent in its influence, are assumed. The most important facts of man's moral nature and life are set forth, and their correspondence is shown with the leading revelations of Christianity, with what Christianity teaches of the character and government of God, the unique character and ministry of Christ, and with the moral teaching of Christianity.

Conscience accords with Christianity. Man's aspirations after perfection are met by it. The redemption it provides is adapted to man's sinful state. Man's moral nature recognizes the beneficial influence of Christianity on society. Conscience responds to the Christian doctrine of retribution. The Christian doctrine of immortality satisfies man's moral nature.

THE WITNESS OF MAN'S MORAL NATURE TO CHRISTIANITY.

THE religion of Christ lays claim to authority so high and special, that it cannot be a matter of surprise that its claims are constantly being questioned. In a sense, Christianity is always on its trial; and happily the witnesses are many upon whom Christianity may call to give evidence on its behalf.

Christianity can call many witnesses in its favour.

Recognizing the value of them all, we propose to examine one of these witnesses with care, thoroughness, and patience.

MAN'S MORAL NATURE AND LIFE may be found, upon attentive inquiry, to yield evidence the most important and material of all. For, be it observed, Christianity is not simply a body of truth; it is a practical law, a revealed principle, motive, and aim of life. And man is not simply an animal, not even simply an intellectual agent; he is a moral being, with perceptions of right, a con-

Of which man's moral nature is one of the most important.

sciousness of duty, a power of choice, a nature essentially responsible, with spiritual affinities and immortal hopes. If the evidence furnished by the special nature of man with regard to the claims of Christianity can be fairly taken, that evidence will certainly be relevant, and our conviction is that it will be found to support those claims in a manner both effective and conclusive.

I.

The Nature of the Argument.

Every argument proceeds upon a certain basis of admitted fact; as, for example, the principles of reasoning native to the mind, and the phenomena which actually exist, whether in outward nature, in the mind, or in human society. We here make two assumptions. First, we assume *the facts of man's moral nature* as they are, and can be shown to be. Secondly, we assume *the existence of Christianity* as a religion whose doctrines are recorded in certain well-known documents, and as a religion having a historical origin and wielding an undeniable force in human society.

We assume, 1. The facts of our moral nature and life; and 2. The existence of Christianity as proved in its special documents and in general history.

Addressing ourselves to those who do not deny the facts or disparage the dignity, or even discredit the authority of man's moral nature, we aim at showing them that their acknowledgment

Who are addressed in the Tract.

of man's moral nature, and their reverence for the moral law, should in all justice lead them to admit the authority of the Christian religion. The acceptance of the one may be shown logically to involve the acceptance of the other.

The harmony between man's nature and the Christian religion, becomes apparent upon examination, and favours the belief that Christianity has been provided for and adapted to man's nature by Divine wisdom.

For dogmatic atheists, this line of reasoning has neither validity nor interest. If there be no God, it is useless to endeavour to prove that Christianity has a Divine origin. But it may cast some light upon that great Unknown, in which many minds find, or rather fail to find, the Unknowable. And for deists and sceptics this line of thought has a profound significance, leading them whither many would fain be led, if only they could lay their hand upon the clue.

The argument is one from obvious adaptation, and from certain correspondence.

Look at the works of human art. Here is a lock, with many wards and curious intricacies; and here is a key, unlike other keys, and with singular peculiarities. Experience shows that there is a correspondence between the lock and the key, for the one exactly fits and easily opens the other. They are the workmanship of the same skilful artificer, and are made, under the direction of the same intelligent design, each for the other. The key fits the lock; the lock, so to speak, explains, accounts satisfactorily for, the key.

Look at one of the works of Nature,—as we

should say, of Divine creative power. Take some part of man's bodily constitution. Here is the eye, a marvel of optical mechanism. And here is light, an ethereal undulation, entering the eye, affecting the optic nerve, and awakening the sensation of sight. We say, the eye is adapted to the light; light is adapted to the eye; neither can be understood or explained without the other. The theist recognizes in these the designed and corresponding products of the wisdom and the power of the same Divine Optician and Mechanician.

Illustrations of adaptations in the physical realm.

The rejection of design, of purpose, is irrational and unphilosophical. The repudiation of conscious purpose, and of voluntary effort to attain purpose, in the human sphere, is the extinction of philosophy, and is an insult to consciousness. If mind have indeed presided over the creation or development of the Universe, it would be absurd to exclude such adaptations as are everywhere apparent in nature from the province of that mind's foresight and control.

If there are traces of design in the constitution of man's moral nature; if he may justly be said to have been made so as to distinguish between right and wrong, to approve of virtue, to aspire to progress and perfection in all good, to find a law and motive to the better life in a super-sensible sphere; if man's nature is distinctively religious, having reference to a Divine Ruler and Lord: if this be so, what

follows? This follows: that, if Christianity be the revelation of the mind and heart of the Supreme, *we may expect to find a correspondence between the two;* they may be expected jointly to disclose the intentions of their common Author, and will find, each in the other, its proper complement.

Applicability of this argument to the moral and spiritual realm.

It is not urged that this correspondence demonstrates the authority of Christianity. The case is not one for demonstration, which belongs to another sphere. But it is claimed that there is a *high degree of probability* that the Author of nature and of man, who is consequently the Author of what is most distinctively human,—man's moral nature,—is also the Author of Christianity, as a religion adapted alike to man's deepest needs and loftiest aspirations.

The argument does not require in order to its appreciation any special knowledge; it addresses itself to all readers.

The witness before us has this advantage over some others: it speaks a language all can understand. Every reflecting man who desires to know what is true, to love what is good, to do what is right, hears, from the recesses of his own breast, and in his own familiar language, the evidence in question. The reader has not to ask, What is the dictum of the scientist, or the philosopher, or the scholar? but, What is the deliverance of my own conscience, my own heart, my own daily experience and observation? "The Word is nigh thee; even in thy mouth, and in thy heart." Romans x. 8.

This remark, of course, presumes, on the part of

the inquirer, not only attention to his own nature, but also a candid consideration of the real claims of the Christian religion. Let it be clearly understood that it is not of Christianity as embodied, with more or less of justice and completeness, in the life of its professors, that we speak; far less is it of any actual historic church; for both professing Christians and "visible churches" have too often utterly misrepresented the religion they have claimed to represent to the world. We speak of Christianity as constituted by its authoritative Founder.

This appeal to man's moral constitution as in harmony with the religion of Christ constitutes an argument both reasonable and valid, and one the force of which all men are capable of feeling.

The appeal to man's moral nature is one which reason justifies.

It would be a mistake to suppose that an appeal to the moral nature of man is an appeal to evidence opposed to reason, or independent of reason. If we were to try to show, from a careful inquiry into man's bodily constitution, that he is adapted to a life of labour and temperance, and if we were able to point out several respects in which such a life contributes to exercise and develop the muscles, to promote digestion, to sustain the physical constitution in health and vigour, to promote comfort, and on the whole to increase the amount of pleasure; the exhibition of such a correspondence would be a reasonable and conclusive method of argument. Similarly, to aim at showing that man is, as a

moral being, adapted to a religious—a Christian—life: this is not to forsake reason, and to take refuge in sentimentality. It is to reason legitimately upon plain and unquestionable facts, according to the natural principles of the intellect with which we are endowed, and upon methods which we constantly and justly employ.

II.

What are the facts of Man's Moral Nature and Life which are of highest interest and value?

That man is a moral being, who can be so shameless as to deny? Philosophy did not wait for the advent of Christianity, before she proclaimed the dignity of man to lie in his capacity for duty, his voluntary subjection to a law of righteousness. On these topics, the glorious thinkers of ancient Greece, Plato and Aristotle, have said things as grand as literature records. It needs not that one be a Christian, it is enough that one be a man, in order to appreciate and to insist upon the supreme excellence of morality as the crown of human nature and life.

The admission that man is a moral being.

Are we like cattle, that we need but to be fed and housed, left to live our little term, and die? Are we only raised above the brutes by a more

developed intelligence, by a higher power of adapting means to ends, by a faculty of foresight, by the gift or acquirement of articulate speech? Might we not possess all these, and yet be less than men? What is it that gives to a human being dignity in his own view, and interest in the view of his fellows? It is the possession of a moral nature and life, which distinguishes man from the brutes, which is his chief characteristic, his noblest prerogative.

Moral capacity and faculty the chief prerogative of man.

Show me a fellow-creature who suffers every disadvantage incident to the state of humanity. Let him be crippled in his limbs, feeble in his frame, poor in circumstances. Let his calling be mean and sordid, and let there be in his appearance and his station nothing to excite the vulgar admiration or even attention. Let him be of neglected education, untrained and undeveloped powers. Still, you show me a *man;* and, because he is a man I honour him. Poor, feeble, ignorant though he be, he is capable of much that is purest, gentlest, bravest, noblest, best in humanity. He can be a dutiful son, a faithful husband, a kind and self-denying father, a loyal subject, and a generous friend. He can love; he can shed the tear of sympathy; he can bear his daily burden of labour and care with cheerfulness. He can toil through patient years for wife and child; he can reach to a sinking brother the hand of willing help. He

can brave the scorn of the bigot and the insult of the fool, and can hold to his own convictions through misunderstanding and persecution. He can worship his Maker, and can trust his Saviour. And, when the time comes for him to die, he can, not with brutish indifference, but with tranquil confidence, lie down, and give up his soul into the hands of Him who gave it.

The being, of whom all this and more than this is true, is a being possessed of a moral nature. He has a clear view of the right, and the power to admire, to choose, and to perform it. He has a conscience to which he may be loyal. He can frame to himself some notion of a God, and can recognize the presence and the voice of the Divine Father. He can even deliberately order his life by reference to a standard of good which he has not realized, and with a view to an eternity which only faith can see.

A full and fair statement of the facts demanded

There is a sense in which our opponents admit the moral nature of man. No one denies that man has capacity for action; and it is maintained by some that he is always driven to act by a desire to obtain pleasure and avoid pain. But this does not represent, and obviously does not exhaust, the facts of the case. Human nature and life involve something more than the balance between bodily functions and external nature, accompanied by consciousness, and especially by joy and suffering.

The prominent facts of morality.

Not here attempting to explain the undoubted connection between the physical and the mental, and simply rejecting as unphilosophical the dogmatic assertion of the subserviency of the latter to the former, we would lay down certain facts.

Moral freedom.

Liberty, though, on purely dogmatic and irrelevant grounds, questioned by some students of physical science, is so evident a fact of human nature that men act upon its reality in reference both to themselves and to others. It is the highest prerogative of the spirit that it possesses true freedom and self-government.

Responsibility.

Responsibility is a consequence of freedom, and means something more than a mere mechanical subjection to punishment inflicted by fatal laws upon those who break them. Every effort to reduce man to the position of a wheel in the vast mechanism of nature, moving as he is moved, rouses the protest of dishonoured and outraged humanity. Man chooses between a lower and a higher principle of action, assured that his own moral elevation or deterioration is involved in the choice he makes.

Conscience and moral obligation or duty.

Conscience and *Duty* are inseparable and correlative. What man *ought* to do, the voice within approves and enjoins with a moral imperative. Theories of conscience differ, but the great cardinal fact of conscience remains unassailable. The com-

mand of *duty* within responds to the standard of *right* without us.

The law of right.

The *Moral Law* is something quite different from that uniformity of sequence which is denominated law (by a usage of adaptation) among the cultivators of physical science. It has also important points of difference from those social and political regulations which, as one source, supply us with the conception. It is independent of man's judgment and feeling; yet its excellence and authority may be intuitively perceived. Whether obeyed or violated, it asserts its rightful pre-eminence, and deigns not to lower its lofty claims, however they may be defied or resented by the rebellious.

The primary facts of man's moral nature summed up.

Such are the great primary facts of man's moral nature: liberty of choice between higher and lower ends and motives, an inner conviction of responsibility for the choice resolved upon, an intelligent apprehension of the law of rectitude, a consciousness of obligation to obey that high and sacred and imperative command; a nature which can upbraid for sin, and which can aspire to goodness.

A moral nature man's distinguishing characteristic.

The possession of a moral nature, the subjection to a moral law, must be regarded as man's distinguishing characteristic, his noblest endowment. It is not a man's property; it is not his capacity for enjoyment; it is not even his power of knowing and subduing nature, which constitutes man's chief interest and real dignity.

The all-importance of character.

It is his *character*, by which we understand the principles which he voluntarily accepts, and deliberately embodies in his conduct; the moral tone and temper of his life; the moral influence he exercises over his fellow-men. It is these, in a word, which give true humanity to man.

Society acknowledges the supreme importance of morality.

These truths are not merely asserted by ethical philosophers and theologians: they are *recognized in human society*. Mutual confidence is at the foundation of social and civil relationships. Justice is required, and benevolence is praised, in all civilized societies. Virtue, disinterestedness, and unselfishness are held in esteem, even by those who do not themselves possess such qualities, and whether they profess to esteem them or not. The regulations of society embody some portions of the moral law, and rely upon some of the moral sanctions.

Parts of morality embodied in legislation.

So important is morality deemed in human communities, that it is in part elaborated in jurisprudence and embodied in legislation. The governments of earth, the laws of nations, the magistracies by which law is administered, and the penalties by which it is enforced,—all are witnesses to the exalted position which the conduct of men, and the springs and motives and aims of conduct, hold in the estimation of mankind.

To complete, for our purpose, this review of man's moral nature, we must advert to a distinction

of great importance, which is in theory often overlooked, though practically too obvious for concealment. Human nature may be regarded, either as in its possible excellence, or in its actual defects. Scientifically, we may distinguish between the *normal* and *abnormal* state of man. We do not need the Scriptures or the witness of religious teachers to convince us of the reality of this distinction. What man's nature is ideally, is one thing; what it is actually, is another. We do not find this distinction elsewhere; and its existence here implies the speciality of the moral nature and life of man.

Apart even from theology, man's nature must be regarded in 1. Its normal, and 2. Its abnormal state.

Man, as we know him, is in an *abnormal* condition. There are those who would not agree to this statement, who would say: Man is as nature made him; but is in the way to be something better, which also nature will make him in good time. At all events, this must be granted as true of men, that they are not generally what they ought to be, and may be, and perhaps will be. There is a schism between the ideal and the actual. Moral evil, what theologians call *sin*, is a great and fearful fact.

Man is constituted for holiness; yet has fallen into a state of sin.

This significant duality may, at first sight, seem to render it a very difficult task to take the evidence of man's moral nature. On the one side we have man's highest intuitions of what is good and morally beautiful. On the other side we have

The evidence of his moral nature and state is accordingly twofold, and is all the more convincingly in favour of Christianity.

man's evil tendencies and habits. If we say man's nature is noble, admirable, sublime, the loftiest of the Creator's works, we speak the mere and undeniable truth. If we say man's nature is corrupt and depraved, who can dispute the assertion? In the one case, we use the term "nature" of the ideal, and perhaps attainable state of man, as that which is most excellent, and most imbued with and most illustrating the Divine. In the other case we use "nature" to designate the actual, the general state in which men are found to be living, wherever they exist.

Does this twofold and (as it may seem at the first view) all but contradictory view of man's moral state, render it an impossibility to elicit a coherent testimony, whether for or against Christianity? Our contention is that this fact, which seems to present a difficulty, does in reality impart to the witness in question a convincing and conclusive power.

III.

IT REMAINS TO EXHIBIT IN SEVERAL PARTICULARS OF ADMITTED IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE, THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MAN'S MORAL NATURE AND LIFE ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE LEADING REVELATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE OTHER.

IN this endeavour the twofold aspect of man's moral nature and condition must be kept in sight. Is it the fact that human nature is excellent, admirable, transcending all earthly things in dignity and value? Has man a power — whether by creation, inheritance, or acquisition,—a power of appreciating and perhaps realizing all moral beauty? Then it must be shown that Christianity offers to him the ideal, the very source of all goodness, in the God whom it reveals; and the realization, the model, the motive of all goodness, in the Saviour whom it alone presents to man. Is it also the fact that man's nature is a fallen nature, or (if this representation be objected to) a very imperfect nature, prone to come short of the high ideal, which nevertheless is native and proper to it, and apt to take the lower level and to seek the lower end? Then it must be shown that Christianity comes to Him recognizing this fact, and prepared to deal with it, not by palliating or overlooking the

Christianity both realizes man's highest ideal of moral goodness, and provides a salvation from his debased condition.

mischief, but by convincing men of sin, by securing to them Divine forgiveness, by extending to them the Divine remedy of compassion and mercy, by providing for them the means to a new and holy life.

1

Man's Moral Nature agrees with the witness of Christianity to the Character and Government of God.

Some philosophers, as Sir William Hamilton, have gone too far in affirming that nature has no convincing testimony to give to its Creator and Lord, that nature conceals God, and that only our moral constitution gives evidence of a spiritual Maker and Ruler. Still it seems just to say that our moral nature is the one leading interpreter of the great facts of the Divine government. Especially is this the case with the moral attributes displayed in the Divine treatment of humanity. The very ideas of righteousness, mercy, long-suffering, retribution, are ideas which we do indeed apply to our conception of God, but which we derive from our own constitution, our own relations, and from those varied experiences which our constitution underlies, which our relations develop. We can conceive of intelligent but non-moral beings, who might perceive the traces of power,

Our moral nature renders us capable of apprehending the moral attributes of God.

wisdom, and foresight, as these exist in the material world. But it is only a moral nature that can admire, revere, adore; that can cherish gratitude, faith, and love. Intellect might apprehend something of a mighty Artificer, but only a moral being can recognize a just and merciful Ruler, a tender and benevolent Father.

Only a moral nature can revere and love.

Just such a Deity as the Scriptures reveal, as the Lord Christ most clearly and fully manifests, just such a Deity our nature is constructed to acknowledge as corresponding to itself. In virtue of our moral constitution, we appreciate moral excellence and beauty, and we are capable of adoring a Being, who in virtue of possessing moral attributes in perfection, deserves and commands our faith, homage, and worship. The eternal Supreme, revealed in the Bible, and manifested in Jesus Christ, realizes all our conceptions of moral perfection; nay, He actually exalts and purifies those conceptions themselves. This indeed, if what has been said is justifiable, is only what might have been expected. He who framed the soul-harp as His own choicest workmanship, He, and He alone, can sweep all its strings, and can call forth all its celestial melody.

All our conceptions of moral perfection realized in the God revealed in the Bible and manifested in Christ.

Our constitution is such that we recognize and revere moral authority,—moral, as distinguished from the authority of mere force. In this, however the origin of such a constitution be accounted

Our constitution recognizes moral authority.

The soul finds full satisfaction in the Christian revelation of the Supreme.

for, we are above the most sagacious of the brutes. Justice and equity, loyalty and unfaithfulness, merit and ill-desert, mercy and forgiveness, reward and punishment, all these are ideas familiar in human society, and are necessary, not only to its order and welfare, but even to its existence. And as our moral qualities suggest the Divine attributes, so our moral and social relationships, and the ideas to which they give rise, suggest the character and principles of the Divine government. The fact is, that when revelation makes known the kingdom of God, the mind and heart of man find in that kingdom a perfect satisfaction. The principles and methods of that government, the more they are understood, the more do they commend themselves to our nature. The voice within answers to the voice without. As the rocks upon a river's bank send back in echo the roar of the cannon or the music of the horn, so does the Divinely fashioned heart of man yield an immediate and exact response, alike to the thunders of Sinai's law, and to the still small voice that reaches us from the sacred hills of Galilee, or from the sorrowful garden of Gethsemane.

2.

Man's Moral Nature witnesses to the Unique Character and Ministry of Christ.

History witnesses to the facts of the Saviour's life; but the heart witnesses to the Saviour Himself.

The personality of God involved in moral authority and rule.

An impersonal God is an abstraction, to which little interest can attach, and from which no help can come. If God be defined as "the Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," the question forces itself, Is such a Power conceivable which is not the power of a living, conscious, intelligent Being? Is moral power—and that which makes for righteousness must surely be moral—conceivable, apart from a nature distinguished by moral qualities, in which nature, the moral power, must reside? The recognition of a moral rule involves the being of a living and personal God.

Now, Christianity is *the* religion which makes known a personal Deity, and thus contradicts at once the polytheism of the Gentiles and the pantheism of the philosophers. And how does it render this service to humanity? By revealing to us, in and by Jesus Christ, the living God, who is "the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." The personality of the Eternal was indeed revealed to the Hebrews, but it was in Jesus of

Nazareth that the Divine nature was brought near to man. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

John i. 14.

God revealed by Christ.

So far as oral teaching extends, perhaps more of God was taught by Jesus in two utterances than has been taught in all words beside. When He had said, "God is a Spirit," and had taught His disciples to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven," He had revealed more than volumes of philosophy could have unfolded.

John iv. 24.

Matt. vi. 9.

And in Christ.

But it was *in Himself* that the chief revelation was conveyed to mankind. "He that hath seen Me," said Christ, "hath seen the Father." Through the Incarnation Christianity conveys the knowledge of the Father. No longer was God distant, hard to apprehend and to realize. From that time onward the most elevated human notion of the Supreme and Eternal has been derived from the Son, who made known the Father. The human heart had long cried aloud for the Creator, the Ruler, the Father; and now the response came, not in words, but in the person and ministry, the character and influence, the sufferings and sacrifice, the triumph and glory of the Christ. The human heart received and welcomed the response, and has never ceased to welcome it with gratitude and with joy. "This is our God; we have waited for Him!" The attributes which the soul most admires and

John xiv. 9.

Isa. xxv. 9.

honours it sees vital and active in the life of Immanuel. The righteousness and holiness, the benevolence and pity, which are embodied in the earthly ministry of Jesus, perfectly correspond with the intuitions of the moral nature. It cannot be denied that the moral nature recognizes in Christ the realization of its ideal of moral perfection. Who does not feel that it would be an absurdity to put forward any other being as the incarnation of absolute moral excellence? We should shrink, as from a madman, from any fellow-man who claimed for himself a sinless nature and a perfect virtue. But He, who asserted Himself to be the Son of God, was above all detraction, and is entitled, by the suffrages of mankind, to the designation: "the Holy One and the Just." "Which of you," said He, "convinceth Me of sin?" "Why callest thou Me good?" was His question addressed to an admiring inquirer: "there is none good save God," which was a virtual claim to be "equal with God." Witnesses at His trial could substantiate no charge against Him; His judge found no fault in Him; the officer who superintended His crucifixion averred, "Certainly this was a righteous man!" and the dying malefactor justly testified, "This man hath done nothing amiss." Thus the unprejudiced observers of His life acknowledged His peerless holiness, and even prejudice itself was dumb before the moral dignity of the Son of Man.

The ethical perfection and peerless beauty of the character of Jesus.

John viii. 46.

Matthew xix. 7.

Luke xxiii. 47.

Luke xxiii. 41.

The judgment of contemporaries did but anticipate the judgment of coming generations. Men may not always be the best judges of what is true or of what is wise; but the common voice hails the goodness of the good, and the greatness of the great. The moral nature of man is the same throughout the ages; and there is no mistaking its verdict upon the claims of Christ. The moral judgment renders belief to His words, consent to His claims, veneration to His character.

The testimony of the heart of humanity to the Divine Saviour.

There was, and is, but one solution to the problem presented by the unique phenomenon. Christ is the Son of the Father, who came from God, and went to God. A solution this, which not the white light of reason only, but the warm glow of pure and sympathetic feeling, reveals as conclusive and satisfactory. A solution this, in which the universal conscience finds repose. A solution this, in which the wisest and the best of men have acquiesced, and which has rejoiced the hearts of untold myriads of needy, sinful, yearning, and aspiring beings.

3.

MAN'S MORAL NATURE ATTESTS THE EXCELLENCE OF THE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND THE ETHICAL CODE OF CHRISTIANITY.

In the ancient Paganism, religion and morality were independent of each other; religion consisted of a routine of observances conducted largely by a priesthood,—and morality, when scientific, based itself upon philosophy. In the Hebrew system there was a combination of doctrinal beliefs with ethical commands; and every reader of the Old Testament is aware that conduct is very largely the province which religious law-givers and prophets sought to conquer and to hold for God, the righteous King. The Christian Scriptures stand pre-eminent in their insistance upon morality as the "fruit" of religion. And what a morality it is! Even unbelievers have exhausted the resources of language in their efforts to extol its purity, its adaptation, its spiritual power. Two peculiarities are here especially deserving of notice. (1.) *The unsectarian, catholic nature of Christian ethics.* Other systems have their favourite virtues, their distinctive aspect of the moral life of man. Now, looking for the moment only at morality as concerned with man's relation to his fellow-man, it may be asserted that

Revealed religion differs from heathen religions in being ethical.

The New Testament code of morals is comprehensive and complete.

the Christian code is faultless and complete, though not, of course, in the view of scientific jurisprudence, systematic. Let any one who doubts this read the fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel and the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. It cannot but be observed that, whilst the sterner virtues of justice, fortitude, and chastity, are stringently enjoined, a special stress has been laid upon what may be termed the gentler and softer virtues of compassion and benevolence, which have generally been regarded as distinctively Christian. There is not a human one-sidedness, but rather a Divine comprehensiveness and completeness in the ethical code of the New Testament. (2.) Attention should also be paid to another prominent feature of Christian morality: *the insistence upon the subjection to the perfect law of holiness and charity of the very thoughts and desires of the heart.* This is a philosophical principle; but it is philosophy made practical and popular. It recognizes that the spiritual nature is the source of the good and evil which display themselves in the actions of the life. Out of the heart—such is the teaching of the Prophet of Nazareth—out of the heart proceed the actual vices and the actual virtues of mankind. As pure streams from a fountain undefiled, so the moral excellences that promote the welfare of society flow from a heart cleansed by the Spirit and warm with the love of God.

It is also spiritual, dealing not only with actions, but with thoughts and desires.

Now, however philosophers in their exalted moods may have recognized the necessity of a spiritual lustration, it is certain that Christianity alone has made the belief of the need of inward purification and holiness the common possession of man. Judaism did partially for one nation what in this matter Christianity is doing for the race. No religion is so resolutely opposed as is ours to the substitution of the formal and ceremonial,—or even of outward rectitude of conduct,—for the real purity and charity of the spiritual centre of our being.

In reply to this it is said on the one hand, that this very spirituality is opposed to human nature, and that therefore instead of a harmony we have a discord, and that thus our argument is shown to be invalid. No doubt Christian morality is alien from the inclinations of those who are living a life of unrestrained passion and self-indulgence. Yet even their conscience takes part with religion against their impulses and habits. Account for it as we may, there is that in the breast of the man who will allow himself to reflect, who will give time for the inner voice to speak, there is that which witnesses to the excellence and beauty of the moral law. Our nature bows down before the highest expression of moral authority; awed and wondering reverence greets the Divine Presence. Even amongst those whom Christianity

Passion may oppose, but conscience must approve the demands of Christian morality.

would designate "the unregenerate," there are those whose candour constrains them to the famous confession of the Roman poet: "I see and approve the better things, whilst I follow those which are worse!"

Ovid.

Another objection assails our argument from the contrary side. We are told that the morality of Christianity is indeed lofty, but yet is the outgrowth of the ethical sentiments in human nature; that as every quality has appeared in its perfection in some human beings, so goodness was pre-eminently represented in Jesus, and was painted in colours of especial attractiveness by Him, and by those of His immediate school who drank most fully into His spirit; that there are not two terms to be considered and harmonized, morality and Christianity, for the religion is but the loftiest embodiment of man's moral nature, the flower developed by the vigorous moral life of humanity.

Christianity and its standard of goodness, came not from man, but to man, from God.

But the fact is, that the ethics of Christianity did not come *from* man but *to* man, that the Lord Jesus professed a Divine authority for His revelations, and that, after all, what gives Christian morality its true power is its actual embodiment in Christ Himself, and the special motive to aspiration and obedience which He furnished in His voluntary devotion to the cross for the salvation of mankind.

To appreciate the argument, the reader must

bear in mind what has been said regarding the two aspects of human nature. Man's moral constitution in its *normal* state involves reverence for a law of right, a law independent, spiritual, all-embracing, and of impalpable and invisible, yet supreme authority and sanction. The attempts which have been made to substitute pleasure for right, as the ultimate law of human conduct, have either failed by their destruction of morality altogether, or have really abdicated in favour of a principle disinterested and dignified. The reader of contemporary philosophy will appreciate this remark by recalling the progress from Jeremy Bentham's system to Mr. J. S. Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and from this to the theories of Mr. Herbert Spencer in the *Data of Ethics*. It must be acknowledged that we are amenable to law, and to a law higher than any originating in human society, and that we are so constituted that we feel this to be the case.

Systems of morality based on pleasure cannot satisfy man's moral nature; whilst the system revealed in the New Testament can, and does.

Both sides of human nature bear witness to the morality of the New Testament. Our sinful inclinations and habits are evidence that ethics so lofty did not originate with man, but came from a higher and independent source. And our moral intuitions admit and admire the justice of claims so lofty, and the beauty of an ideal so Divine.

4.

THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE, OR IMPERATIVE OF MORAL OBLIGATION, IS IN ACCORD WITH THE RELIGION OF CHRIST.

The consciousness of duty is ineffaceable.

There is within man a deep-seated consciousness of *duty*. When, combined with erroneous beliefs and with groundless prejudices, this faculty may and does lead to perseverance in wrong-doing; but in itself it is a noble attribute of humanity. Endeavours have been made to do away with the great facts of duty and conscience, to resolve them into such principles as interest,—or the dread of suffering,—or the associations of early training,—or the gregarious impulse which leads men to flock upon the same tracks. But these efforts cannot be said to have succeeded, notwithstanding the dogmatism of the great modern utilitarian who averred that the word "ought" was a word that "ought" to be banished from language! Bentham was indeed a witness against his own theory; for he taught that "every pleasure is a *primâ facie* good, and '*ought*' to be pursued."

Apart from questions as to the genesis of conscience, the paramount claims of duty are admitted, although there may be differences of opinion as to the sphere within which it works. Virtuous and lofty minds agree in acknowledging both the com-

manding imperative, and the awful beauty of moral obligation. Who can do other than sympathize with the invocation of our philosophic poet:

Words-worth's Ode to Duty.

"Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens, through thee are fresh and strong."

Now let us ask, What is the relation between the consciousness of obligation within, and Christianity? The question almost answers itself. Conscience is assumed, is appealed to, in every book of Scripture. There are nowhere to be found appeals to man's sense of duty which for power and pungency can rival those of Holy Writ. In the discourses of our Lord, and in the treatises of His apostles, the highest honour is put upon our moral nature, for it is addressed and challenged, its sanction is invoked with confidence. No doubt, Christian ministers and churches have often sought to work upon men's base fears, and selfish interests, and superstitious tendencies. Our religion does indeed warn men of the fatal consequences of unbelief and disobedience; and, on the other hand, it seeks to allure men by the appropriate and powerful motive which impels us to seek our true happiness.

Christianity addresses its appeals to all parts of man's nature.

Yet the Scriptures are remarkable for their habit of appealing to the very highest principles. There is a verse in St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians which confirms, in a very striking way, the assertion just made: "By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience (literally, to every conscience of men) in the sight of God." This is quite in harmony with all Christian appeal. Not to sense, or carnal, worldly interest; not to superstitious terror; not to desire for human applause,—but to the moral nature, the conscience, the responsive confession of the enlightened, but not unbiassed soul, —the voice which we hold to be from heaven addresses itself. We submit that the accord between the summons and the response is evidence that the same wisdom appointed both, and made the one for the other. A heathen moralist felt this, when he wrote: "Sacer intra nos spiritus sedet, bonorum malorum que nostrorum observator et custos." (There has its seat within us a holy spirit, the watcher and guardian of what in us is good and evil.) With Seneca this belief was, alas! consistent with disobedience to the authority which yet he confessed to be Divine. The power of Christian gratitude and love made Paul's life a far nobler and more consistent thing. And what Paul felt, the lowliest disciple of Christ feels too, though in an inarticulate and unphilosophical fashion. As the thrill of the

But its highest, favourite, and most effective appeal is to conscience.

2 Corinthians iv. 2.

Seneca.

stricken lute-string evokes the sympathetic vibration of the untouched chord of its companion instrument; so, when Christ speaks, however softly, yet with a Divine authority, it is to call forth the responsive music of the human soul. There is one explanation of this harmony which deserves consideration: it is the conviction which Christians have formed, that the same Divine Spirit who speaks in the Word, and by the Christ, speaks also in the sympathetic and responsive spirit of man.

5.

There is harmony between Man's aspirations towards Moral Perfection and the Religion of Christ.

This assertion may fail to carry conviction to many minds. Oppressed with the spectacle of human sinfulness and degradation, whether freely developed among the brutal and criminal, or carefully concealed by the varnish of luxurious civilization, some observers may be disposed to question the fact of such aspirations as are here assumed. But the distinction already drawn between man's normal and abnormal state must here be borne in mind. We need not extenuate human sinfulness in order to justify a conviction that human nature possesses a strain of moral nobility. Apart from

There is in man aspiration towards a nobler and better life.

considerations of selfish indulgence, mankind have an admiration for self-devotion and moral heroism.

Lecky's *Rise of Rationalism.*

And as character advances in ethical maturity, this admiration is strengthened by sympathy. Mr. Lecky has well said that characters of remarkable holiness have usually been formed under the influence of one or the other of two principles, the sense of sin, and the yearning for holiness.

The aspiration in question is, we may confidently assert, provided for in Christianity as nowhere else. No doubt, as will be shown presently, our religion does lay the greatest stress upon human sinfulness. But it is therefore all the more gloriously characteristic of the breadth of our Christianity that it appeals to the finest possibilities of moral excellence which the constitution of our nature suggests. The New Testament is a trumpet-call, summoning all who acknowledge its authority to aspiration, progress, and eminence in goodness. Our Lord Himself will submit to no compromise with those who, to gain their ends, would take a lower view than the highest, of the aim to be set before them by those who "would be perfect." He not only lays down laws of the utmost spirituality and comprehensiveness, He calls upon us to come after Him, to "take up the cross and follow Him." Inspiration addresses to us the most stirring and sublime monitions: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect!" "I press towards the mark

Christianity assumes that in the human breast there dwells an impulse towards moral progress and perfection; and appeals thereto.

Matt. v. 48.

for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!" Instead of encouraging or suffering men to remain contentedly upon the lower level, the religion which we accept forbids us either to retrograde or to pause, commands us to advance and to aspire. The whole provision of the spiritual economy is adapted to secure our progress. We are assured that we shall not in vain obey the call we have received. On the contrary, we are assured, if we are faithful unto the end, of final and everlasting fellowship with "the spirits of just men made perfect." We are told in very simple, but in most welcome and inspiring language, that the goal to which we tend shall indeed be reached, that we shall acquire the moral lineaments of our great Deliverer and Leader: "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!"

Philippians iii. 14.

The whole provision of the spiritual economy adapted to secure progress.

1 John iii. 2.

6.

The provisions of Christianity are exactly adapted to Man's abnormal, sinful state.

Is there any inconsistency between the belief that man was made for holiness, and the belief that his condition is a sinful and wretched one? It appears that there is none, when it is remembered that the abnormal implies the normal, that depravity is deflection from a standard of rectitude. Sin could have no meaning were it not both a

Man, and man alone of God's creatures on this earth, is sinful.

violation of law and an abuse of nature. We do not charge a beast of prey with moral evil, because of his blood-thirsty tastes and savage ferocious devastations. The beast fulfils his nature; he may be injurious, but is not blameable. But we say that man has sinned, meaning, that in living in violation of the moral law he is not fulfilling his destiny. Only a nature capable of holiness, and meant for holiness, can sin.

Now, man was made for virtue and piety, and can only find his true development in seeking, and his true satisfaction in finding, these. But if this is incontestable, it is equally certain that his life is deflected from a standard which he cannot but admire, that his way is a departure from a course which he cannot but approve. These things being so, there is an obvious *discordance* between man's proper nature and the actual state in which he exists. This is a fact often strangely overlooked by ethical philosophers. Yet it is impossible to take a just estimate of human nature, unless we consider and allow for the discordance between the possible and the actual in human life. In truth, our moral being is so complex, that whilst it admits of the existence and even the prevalence of sin, it lifts up a voice of protest against the powerful position which evil holds in humanity. There are *dicta* of morality, both natural and revealed; but with these *dicta* the actual life of men does not

The discordance between man's proper nature and his present state.

accord. We approve and justify a standard, which, nevertheless, we fail to reach.

If Christianity, or any religion, is oblivious of this very important fact, such obliviousness is its condemnation. But if Christianity assumes this fact, and if its provisions are in accordance with it, then, so far, it is justified. Upon examination, it will be found that the religion of Christ is such, that it has evidently been provided and constructed with reference to the discordance now described. The Scriptures take for granted our strangely divided nature, in which order and disorder, submission and rebellion, strive for the mastery. A great and awful want is acknowledged and declared; but that is not all, for that want a full and perfect provision is made, a provision which evokes from the minds of those who accept it a tribute of grateful appreciation.

Christianity recognizes the existence, power, and curse of sin.

Every reader of the New Testament must be aware that Christianity makes the existence and the prevalence of sin its starting-point. In fact, the reign of moral evil over humanity is represented as the very reason of the existence of our religion. There is very much in our Scriptures which would be adapted to a sinless being: there is the law, there are the impulses, the promises, which we can well believe would be suitable to secure the continuance of such a being in a state of holiness, and his advance to loftier heights of moral excellence. But

The Scriptures deal with man as sinful.

if the New Testament had been intended for such a being, its whole contents must have been reconstructed. For, as it actually is, it presumes that enmity against God exists, and records the provision for reconciliation with Him. Can any inquirer, however superficial, come to any other conclusion than this: that Christianity is a religion designed for a sinful race, and is intended to secure for sinners the blessings of forgiveness, of renewal, of spiritual strength, guidance, progress, and peace?

To be more special upon this point, let us examine *whether with regard to sin, and what sin requires, there is accordance between conscience and Christianity.* They certainly agree in opposing and condemning sin. Yet general custom on the one hand, and popular philosophy on the other, concur in extenuating the evil, proclaiming the necessity, and predicting the perpetuity, of sin. The Bible certainly says very hard things of sin. It is "the transgression of the law," "that which God hates." It is the sign of a heart at "enmity with God." Its ill-desert is such, that no penalty is too severe for those who love and practise sin. "God is angry with the wicked every day." "The way of transgressors is hard." "The sting of death is sin." "The wages of sin is death." All this appears to many very stern and harsh. But if we take the question, not to our inclinations, not to our neighbours, but to the tribunal of our

Our spirits confess that the Scriptural condemnation of sin is just.

1 John iii. 4.

Psa. vii. 11.

Prov. xiii. 15.

1 Cor. xv. 56. Rom. vi. 23.

own conscience, what has this witness,—shall we say this judge?—to pronounce upon the matter? Interrogate, it might be fairly said to every reader, interrogate your own nature! Are you not compelled to admit that all that Scripture says concerning sin is true? that nothing less than this would be the truth? Try to explain away the seriousness, the heinousness, of sin. Listen to the defences, the apologies, by which men have striven to palliate, to excuse, even to justify sin. They do not convince you. On the other hand, you cannot take exception to the treatment of human sin by the Holy Scriptures; when they denounce and rebuke iniquity, when they declare the inconsistency between sin and man's real well-being, they carry your judgment and your better nature with them. Because your heart was not made for sin, your heart witnesses that the Word,—as we term it, the Word of God,—is right, in exhibiting sin as heinous in itself, and as deserving the displeasure of God, the righteous and holy Judge.

Our spirits witness to our urgent need of Divine forgiveness.

Human nature, which witnesses to the reality and enormity of sin, witnesses also to *the need of pardon.* The conscience proclaims that sin is not merely a violation of our nature, but an offence against a personal Ruler and Lord. How deeply rooted is this consciousness of the need of forgiveness, appears from the prominence given, in every religion, to the means by which it is professed that

forgiveness may be secured and enjoyed. It is not necessary here to show (which might, however, be most conclusively done) the futility of the devices for expiating sin and for reconciling the sinner, which have obtained in various stages of society, and which have taken shape in various schemes of religious doctrine and ritual. Neither is it necessary here to expound and defend theories of the Atonement. But it must be pointed out, as distinctive of revealed religion, that it is *redemptive*, that it at the same time condemns the sin more trenchantly than has ever been done elsewhere, and absolves the sinner more completely and effectually than elsewhere has even been proposed or professed. Bishop Butler has shown, in his *Analogy*, the consonance between a mediatorial method of salvation and the usual method of the Divine government. Unless we are in rebellion against the whole moral scheme of the universe, we have reason to acquiesce in the central provision of Christianity now under consideration. And our clearest judgment and our best feelings concur in approving the plan upon which the New Testament represents the Divine Ruler as having proceeded. The conscience of the most intelligent and of those most earnestly striving after goodness finds repose and satisfaction in the gospel of pardon and acceptance through Jesus Christ, in whose incarnation and sacrifice the Divine Governor appears

They approve the scheme of redemption by a Mediator and by sacrifice.

supremely just, and at the same time supremely gracious,—condemning sin and absolving the repenting and believing sinner.

Exception is widely taken in our times to the doctrine of mediation; it is represented by some as violating instead of harmonizing with our convictions of justice. It may, however, be confidently urged that conscience does not rebel against the unadulterated teachings of Revelation. Against these sin and prejudice may revolt, but a quickened and enlightened conscience, never! Those who are offended with this central and vital part of the Christian religion are recommended, in the first place, to examine for themselves what is the teaching of Scripture, and not to waste their energies in fighting a foe of their own invention.

The enlightened conscience never rebels against the Scripture doctrine of mediation.

Another aspect of the treatment of sin and the sinner by the religion of Christ must be considered. There is *a practical hostility to the lofty and exacting demands of spiritual religion.* Whilst the higher nature approves, the baser nature resents those claims. Can this hostility be overcome, and how? A religion which should undertake to pardon sin,—to release the sinner from the penalties consequent upon sin,—and should omit or fail to secure his practical and cheerful submission to the highest law of moral life, would surely betray its origin in man's own selfishness and sinfulness. A religion

Man's nature finds satisfaction in accepting the provision made in Christianity for holiness as well as for pardon

which should, on the other hand, in remitting the consequences of sin, provide for the forgiven sinner's renewal, reformation, and advance in the love and practice of goodness, would seem to proclaim itself the production of Him whose power in the moral universe "makes for righteousness." At all events in this case the moral nature of man will give its cordial assent and approbation, and so far will declare itself a most favourable witness.

Christianity has introduced a moral power into humanity unknown apart from Christian faith and knowledge.

Now, as a matter of fact, Christianity has introduced a moral power into humanity, unknown apart from the presence of Christian faith and knowledge. This power has proved itself adequate to the vanquishing of the natural enmity of the heart to self-control and self-denial. The Christian religion has found and revealed a way of rendering virtue—which is admittedly admirable and desirable—actually attainable; has made the path of obedience progressively congenial, attractive, and delightful. There is general agreement that this is the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity. First, in point of time, comes the provision for pardon; but first in point of real importance comes the provision of a *spiritual power*, which secures the love and practice of holiness. The evidences of that power are open to the observation of all; the secret explanation of that power is a Christian doctrine, which is indeed reasonable, but may not command a universal credence. It is known to

the disciples and friends of the Lord Jesus that the great motive to obedience is love to a personal Saviour, a motive capable of producing results which no other power could effect. The Apostle Paul has summed up this aspect of our religion in his memorable saying, "The love of Christ constraineth us." A motive like this may meet with the scorn and ridicule of worldly and selfish minds; but it is in the highest degree consonant with our nature. Personal gratitude, devotion, and consecration to a Divine Saviour lead to a higher style of morality, a higher type of obedience than can be secured by any other means, however agreeable to a carnal nature and a worldly policy. Grateful love to the Redeemer, awakened and sustained by the Holy Spirit of God, prompts to purposes which inspire and regulate a new moral life. A motive more in consonance with our moral nature it would not be possible to imagine.

The moral power over the heart and over the conduct exercised by the love of Christ.

Let this twofold dealing with the condition of sinful, feeble man be taken into consideration. Let it be observed how Christianity provides for the absolution of the penitent sinner, and for the renewal of the character and the purification of the life. And then let the highest reason and the best feelings of humanity be called upon to speak as to the excellence and adaptation of this provision to human nature and to human need. And if the witness be favourable, surely the fact is

The twofold aspect of Christianity awakens the consent and admiration of man's nature.

worthy of weight in the estimation of those who believe in a Moral Governor of wisdom and benevolence. At all events, it may be confidently said that so far as the evidence of conscience goes, it supports the claim which we make, that Christianity is Divine, and is worthy of all acceptation.

7.

Man's Moral Nature witnesses to the wholesome influence of the Religion of Christ upon Human Society.

No just and complete view of man can regard simply the life of the individual. Although there have been and are tendencies impelling men to accept Christianity simply as designed for their individual salvation, it was not thus that our religion was conceived by its Founder and first promulgators; nor is it thus that its enlightened adherents conceive it to-day. Man is social, is a member of the family, of the state, of the race. If there is in human nature a selfish tendency, there is also a principle of sympathy and benevolence. Much stress is laid, and justly laid, upon a spirit of unselfishness, upon what it has become the fashion to call "altruism," as a principle complementary to the quest of well-comprehended self-interest.

The debt of human society to Christianity.

It may fairly be argued that the strength of

benevolence in modern society is owing to the teaching and to the impulse of Christianity. This, however, is not our present contention. All that is asked is this: is there an agreement between our "better nature," our unselfish aims and efforts, and the truths of the Christian religion taken in conjunction with their influence upon society?

Let the lessons of the New Testament be candidly considered. The Divine Teacher issues His new commandment, "Love one another." He enunciates the principle of unselfish helpfulness in the admonition, "Freely ye have received; freely give." His apostles enjoin the maxim, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." They strike at the trunk, the root, of selfishness with the axe-stroke, "Let every man look, not upon his own things, but every man also upon the things of others." Does not the true, the higher nature of man listen to these laws and precepts with a wondering reverence, and render to them the response of an approving and consenting testimony?

Matt. x. 8.

Gal. vi. 2.

The debt of human society to the precepts of Christianity.

Phil. ii. 4.

Yet it is not by words that the giant selfishness is slain. The life, the love, the sacrifice of Christ Himself are the real weapons of this spiritual warfare. The *cross* is the true and effectual inspiration of man's devotion to the interests of his fellow-man; the enthusiasm of Christ is the true source of "the enthusiasm of humanity."

Its Divine power over the heart.

Cowper

"Talk we of morals? O Thou bleeding Lamb,
The grand morality is love of Thee."

It may be freely admitted that language far too sweeping has sometimes been employed, to describe the actual amelioration of the human lot, which has already been effected by the religion of Jesus Christ. Still, no well-informed and candid person will deny that, of all the forces which have contributed to improve the morals, and to promote the happiness of the race, none can compare for vigour and for efficiency with the Christian faith. Evil is sometimes laid to the charge of Christianity, which is in reality the result of the system of sacerdotalism. But how much of good must in all fairness be credited to the influence of Christ upon mankind!

The warfare of the religion of Christ against human vices and crimes.

Against vice and crime Christianity from the beginning directed its assaults with remarkable energy and success. Against usages and institutions belonging to half-civilized and selfish states of society Christianity prepared its siege of mines and batteries—sooner or later, but only at the right moment—to open fire. The frightful cruelty, the utter and wanton indifference to suffering, the disregard of life, so characteristic of the ancient world, have certainly been immensely diminished by the prevalence of Christian principles. Those principles gradually but surely undermined the degrading institution of slavery, which has now

all but disappeared from among even nominally Christian communities.

What has been done is more than a proof of the beneficent influence of Christianity, and may fairly be deemed an earnest of the triumphs awaiting its progress in the future. There are indications that evils still prevalent, but condemned by our religion, will by its growing influence be checked, if not eradicated. The war has not been carried on with vigour along the whole line where immorality of all kinds is confronted. But this at least may be confidently claimed on behalf of the religion of Christ, that, in every moral conflict in this world, Christianity is on the right side; that, when she speaks, her voice is uniformly and unfalteringly opposed to vice and crime, and in favour of the cause of virtue, liberty, and happiness.

The conquests already made an earnest of those yet to be achieved.

Perhaps even more important than the protest of Christianity against sin is its purifying, elevating, harmonising, and generally beneficial influence upon the social life of men. As a social religion, it has regard to all classes and conditions of men, and seeks their elevation and well-being. It is a kingdom, and its Head contemplates the welfare of every subject; a family in which the interests of no single child are overlooked. It fosters the legitimate development of society, and furthers the progress of mankind towards universal brotherhood and universal happiness. Each Christian

The positive influences of a beneficial character exercised over human society by Christianity.

congregation then only fulfils its mission, when it is a centre of light and spiritual power. Our religion is the enemy of uncharitableness, hatred, envy, social disorganisation, and oppression; it cherishes "the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love." Its aim is to bring mankind into unity, by bringing all men alike into subjection, not to an earthly conqueror or king, but to the true and Divine Head of "the new humanity." Compare its design and its method with those of great military conquerors, or with those of such a fantastic philosopher as Comte, and recognize its vast superiority. Here is the highest ideal of the social life of humanity; for here the free development of the individual is to play its part in the harmonious and ordered co-operation of all the members of society towards the one great ultimate result.

The incomparable power of the religion of Christ as a factor in human progress.

The enlightened and unsophisticated conscience, weighing these claims of Christianity in virtue of its power to effect a social regeneration, is constrained to acknowledge their validity. Man's moral nature recognizes in this religion her mightiest auxiliary in the holy war, discerns her hope fulfilled, her aspirations realized. Compared with other claimants, Christianity, in the view of morality, stands alone, peerless and unapproachable—

> "Fair as a star, when only one
> Is shining in the sky."

8.

There is Agreement between the Christian Doctrine of Retribution and the Moral Judgment or Conscience of Man.

Probably there was a time when religion was regarded by theologians too much as a matter of government, when God was represented too exclusively as the ruler and judge. But in our own day it is common to run into the other—the opposite extreme—and, in laying just stress upon the Fatherhood of God, the pity of Christ, the attractiveness of the Gospel, to leave out of sight, perhaps, even contemptuously to disparage, or to deny the moral government of God. Now, however much a sentimental and invertebrate theology may fret against the doctrine of responsibility and retribution, those doctrines cannot be overthrown as long as human nature remains what it is, as long as the Scriptures are accepted as of supreme authority. They are opposed from two sides.

There is a tendency to conceal the governmental aspect of religion

Those who regard man as an automaton, acted upon by physical forces, and acting as acted upon (and these are a very numerous and influential class in our days), deny moral retribution. Carrying the analogy of natural processes and laws into the spiritual realm, they tell us that nature is a system of inflexible laws, and that he who con-

Materialists deny moral retribution.

forms to those laws will prosper, whilst he who violates them will suffer; that in this sense retribution is a fact, and in no other; that a vicious man, who is prudent, will fare better than a virtuous man who is impulsive; and that, as man ceases to be when his body perishes, we need not concern ourselves about a future which is but a dream.

Sentimentalists agree with Materialists.

On the other hand, those who accept as much of Christianity as falls in with their own fancies and prepossessions, tell us that as God is love, we need be under no apprehension that here or hereafter we shall be called to account for our sins, that a benevolent Deity will secure our happiness irrespectively of our conduct, in view of the righteous and binding law of God.

Now, in this controversy, human theories and imaginations are on one side, whilst on the other are (1) The facts of our moral nature, and (2) the plain statements of Scripture, giving an unmistakably accordant utterance.

Our human life is an education, but it is a probation also. We cannot leave out of view either the reproaches and the remorse of a guilty conscience, or the facts of an overruling and, to some extent, retributive Providence even in this life. Nor, further, can we set aside the anticipation of judgment, which is almost universal amongst men, and which is only exterminated when all is exterminated which raises man above the brutes.

Reason and conscience uphold the retributive character of God's government.

In these respects how perfect is the agreement between the teaching of the New Testament and the enlightened and sensitive conscience of man! Not to dwell upon such general statements as "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world by that man whom He hath ordained," and "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," we may call to mind that from the lips of the benign, compassionate, and gracious Saviour Himself came declarations the most comprehensive and unmistakable regarding human retribution. He pronounced *blessings*, but he also pronounced *woes*. He anticipates that general judgment when all nations shall be gathered before Him, and when the same lips which shall utter the welcome, "Come, ye blessed!" shall also utter the fearful sentence, "Depart, ye cursed!" It is vain to represent religion as wearing only an aspect of benignity; it wears also an aspect of severity; and in this two-fold aspect there is a complete accordance with the manifest facts of our nature.

The New Testament agrees with the enlightened and sensitive conscience.

Acts xx. 31.

2 Cor. v. 10.

Matt. xxv. 34, 41.

9.

Man's Moral Nature finds satisfaction in the Revelations of the Christian Religion concerning Immortality.

Man alone, of the inhabitants of earth has the power to apprehend and to hope for a deathless

life. Men are not to be persuaded that this bodily and earthly life comprises the whole of their being; they have good reasons for believing otherwise. The expectation of an endless hereafter is not merely a conclusion derived from argument; it springs from a natural tendency, a *spiritual aspiration*, strengthened by moral discipline. We refuse to believe that we were made with deathless hopes, destined to be quenched in the cold waters of annihilation and oblivion. Yet reason is insufficient to transform this longing into a definite belief. We can, whilst taught by reason alone, go no further than hope will lead us:

Christianity satisfies man's yearnings for immortal life and blessedness.

Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

> "The hope that, of the living whole,
> No part shall fail beyond the grave;
> Derives it not from what we have
> The likest God within the soul?"

A religion which shall command the acceptance of man's nature, must satisfy man's loftiest yearnings and anticipations with regard to the future, and must reveal a prospect worthy of man's powers and capacities.

The teaching of Christianity is definite upon these points. It encourages the hope that in a higher condition of existence our best aspirations shall be allowed a wider scope. There will be provision for increase of knowledge: for here we know in part, but there shall we know even as we are known. There will be assimilation of character

1 Cor. xiii. 12.

to Him who is supremely good: for "the pure in heart shall see God." There will be limitless accessions to happiness: "blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." There will be abundant room for the exercise of our social sympathies, in "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven." There will be, what is pre-eminently congenial to the Christian heart, intimate fellowship with Christ Himself: for "there shall we ever be with the Lord." There will be eternal security and felicity: for "they go no more out."

The satisfying nature of the promises given and the prospects revealed in the New Testament.

Matt. v. 8.

Rev. xiv. 3.

Heb. xi. 23.

In such representations and assurances Christianity supplies what nature cannot give, fills up the void, makes the vision plain, the voice intelligible. But the case is not merely one of abstract teaching. The explicit declarations of the Saviour are both embodied in His person, and supported and sanctioned by His resurrection. "I," said He, "am the Resurrection and the Life; whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

John xi. 25, 26.

Such are, in brief, the revelations of Christianity concerning what must always be of intense interest to men,—the future and unseen state. Such are the prospects held out by the religion which is equally at home in this world and in the world to come.

What has the moral nature of man to say to

revelations such as these? That nature proposes vast questions; how does it receive these answers? It has been well said: "Every man feels within himself a crowd of desires and faculties which this life does not content; and he would deem himself very unhappy, and Him who has made him very unjust, if his destiny were never to attain this happiness, this perfection of which he has the idea. . . . It is that which unavoidably suggests to him thoughts of the other life; and, these thoughts once awakened within his mind, there is no more rest for him if the doubt remains, and if no clear solution comes to resolve it."

Jouffroy. *Nouveaux Mélanges Philosophiques*, p. 105.

A nature with such requirements cannot be indifferent to the professions and promises of the religion of Christ. Is it likely that man, so constituted, will turn aside from the revelations of Christianity, and adopt, in preference, the teaching of the materialist and atheist, according to whom man perishes like the brutes, and is no more?—a foam-fleck upon the rushing river of universal being? Or will he not rather exclaim: God made the soul for immortality, and appointed immortality for the soul! Here is found the true and longed-for rest; here the strong, sustaining hope!

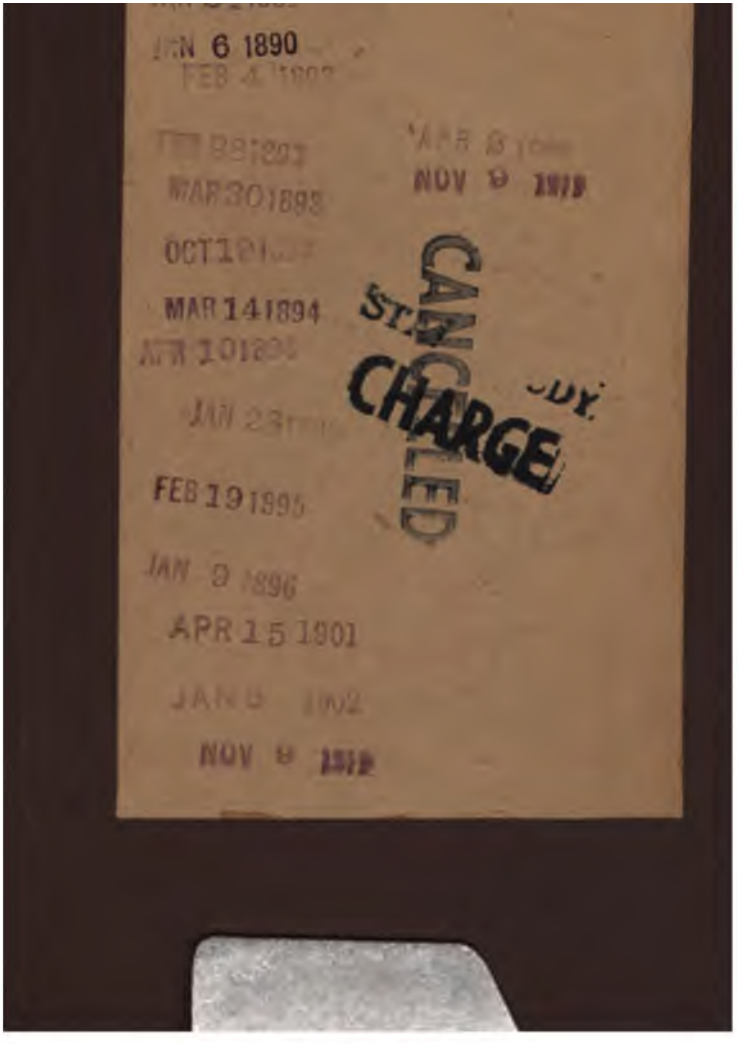
The alternative.

Conclusion.

The argument presented is one of *adaptation and correspondence.* Man's moral nature being an admitted reality, and the Christian religion an acknowledged fact, it has been attempted to show that the one is fitted for the other. Man's esteem and honour for what is right, his contrition for sin, and his aspirations towards immortality; all testify to Him from whom not only do they proceed, but the revelation also that responds to and satisfies them; all testify to the Cross, that brings peace to the conscience and inspiration to the new and better life; all testify to the ascended King Himself, who lives for ever to love and bless, and yet eternally to reign.

The argument one of high probability, cumulative, and practically conclusive

The argument is admittedly one of *probability,* and (it is urged) of probability so high as to afford conclusive reason for action. It is an argument *cumulative* in form. Each one of the particulars mentioned has a certain strength; conjoined together, they constitute a powerful and conclusive argument in favour of our religion, and justify a cordial and practical acknowledgment of its claims.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